AN OLD MAID OF THE MUCH APPROVED STYLE: JULIA ZITELLA COCKE, ALABAMA POET, MUSICIAN AND TEACHER

By

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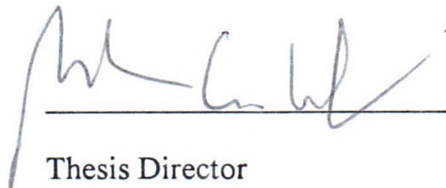

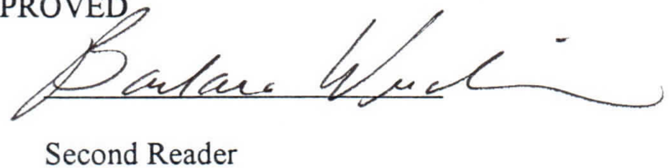

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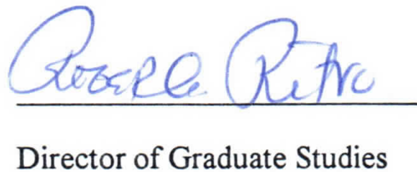

Director of Graduate Studies

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments iii

List of Illustrations vi

Chapters

Introduction 1

Chapter 2 – Life in Antebellum Alabama 11

Chapter 3 – Life in the Civil War and Reconstruction South 43

Chapter 4 – Life in Boston and the Return Home 63

Conclusion 101

Appendices 106

Appendix A – Transcription of Marion Rifles Flag Presentation 107

Appendix B – Selected Poems Used in Chapter 3 112

Appendix C – Transcription of Alabama Legislative Resolution 124

Appendix D – Example of Zitella Cocke's Published Sheet Music 126

Bibliography 132

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Photographs Page

1. Zitella Cocke Portrait by Nicola Marschall (Courtesy of the Alabama Department of Archives and History) vii
2. Judson Female Institute (Courtesy of the Alabama Department of Archives and History) 37
3. Zitella Cocke, from An Appreciation of the Life and Writings of Zitella Cocke, by Mary L. Eborn (Courtesy of the Birmingham Public Library, Archives) 100

INTRODUCTION

In a February third letter to Thomas McAdory Owen, Zitella Cocke considered herself unworthy of mention in his compilation *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography.*[1] Nothing could be further from the truth. Zitella Cocke could be considered a representative of the women in the Southern cotton culture. She enjoyed every luxury and opportunity that her family's wealth and prominence could afford. This wealth meant she could be educated when many white Southerners could not. She spent time in Europe learning music from the masters, while poorer women had to toil in the homes and fields of the rural South. She possessed a strong independent personality and passion that is rarely seen in Southern, antebellum women. She did not marry at an early age like many of her peers, and she pursued a career when other Southern women stayed at home attending to others. Her passion and strong will are representative of today's Southern woman. Every experience shaped her into the woman that would proudly declare that she was a Southern lady.

So why does this woman deserve a study of her life? Her path in life, though it may have started like that of any other woman, diverged from the well-beaten road. She decided, whether from some tragic incident or a willing decision, that married life was

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[1] Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Thomas McAdory Owen, Montgomery, Ala., February 3, circa 1900s, Zitella Cocke Papers, LPR 161, Alabama Department of Archives and History (hereafter referred to as ADAH). Because Zitella often left off the years of her letters, many of her letters to Thomas and Marie Owen in Alabama have only the month and day. She corresponded quite frequently with the Thomas and Marie Owen, and since they were developing the Alabama State Archives at the time, they inquired into her life, and she provided them with valuable information and insight.

not for her and that she desired to be more than just a "Southern lady." She pursued a life of teaching and writing that many in her native state would have considered demeaning and totally beneath a "Southern lady" of her status. She excelled in whatever she set her heart to and left a legacy not recognized by many of her Southern peers. Yet, despite her prominence in the literary culture of the western world, a serious study had not been done on her life. The closest thing resembling a study was a thesis finished shortly after Cocke's death, but that study focused little on her life and more on her writings. This thesis endeavors to tell the story of Zitella Cocke as completely as current documentation permits and to show that there is more to this woman's life than a few poems and a Southern heritage.

This thesis focuses on the ways Zitella Cocke's life influenced her writings and is divided into three sections. The first section of the thesis focuses on Cocke's early life and examines the influence of her ancestry and antebellum plantation life on her developmental years, and her education by her mother, private tutors, the Judson Female Institute and the European tour. The second section will document her stint teaching music at several colleges while providing for her family during the Civil War and Reconstruction. It will also discuss her participation in the famous flag presentation to the Marion Rifles held on the lawn of Judson Female Institute at the beginning of the Civil War in 1861 and the role of the Civil War and the Reconstruction in her life and writings. By looking at her early life, the thesis will follow the development of her identity as a "Southerner" in a rapidly changing world. The final section will chronicle Cocke's life after the death of her mother, her move to Boston where she began publishing her writings and musical compositions, and her return to Alabama. In this late

period of her life, she wrote on many issues colored by her experiences as a Southerner and the personal tragedies in her life. This section also contains a brief study of Boston and the effect its culture had on Cocke during her years of residency. The final section also examines the content of Cocke's poems and music and their relation to her life.

Zitella Cocke not only lived through the Civil War, Reconstruction and well into the twentieth century, she left behind a substantial collection of poetry, literature and music. Among her writings are her volumes of collected poems: *A Doric Reed* (1897), *The Grasshopper's Hop* (1901), and *The Cherokee Rose and Other Southern Poems* (1907). Her compositions found favor internationally, especially in Canada and Great Britain. Many of her works have been translated into other languages and can be found in many of the leading libraries throughout Europe. For her verse, Zitella Cocke was elected to the Author's Club of London in 1910 and won the acclaim of many critics. Although New England and Europe quickly recognized her literary talent, people in Alabama, particularly her hometown of Marion, knew her primarily from her participation in a Civil War flag presentation.

The South never bestowed upon this woman the same level of recognition for her literary efforts that she received in New England and Europe. When she began writing, the South had just begun to emerge from the trials and hardships of war and federal occupation. Rebuilding the South was important during the last decades of the nineteenth century, and many Southerners viewed literature not directly linked or related to the region as not being of great importance in their everyday lives. Because of the devastation left by the war, Zitella Cocke moved north to Boston, which was the hub for literary work and publishing. Her move north opened new opportunities for success

throughout much of the world, but it may have also limited her Southern readership. The Civil War created a tension between the Northern and Southern states and those Southerners who embraced the idea of the "Lost Cause" held contempt for most things Northern and for those Southerners who left the South to pursue lives in the North. Zitella Cocke did not desert her native land by moving to Boston for the move enabled her to be near the great publishing houses of the United States. The three volumes of poems produced by Zitella Cocke were distinctly Southern in flavor and painted an exquisite portrait of her native state. Although the South did not purchase many copies of her poetry volumes, Zitella Cocke was not bitter towards her native state. She had personally witnessed death and destruction in the South and understood the reluctance and lack of funds to purchase books. Though Zitella Cocke never was a best selling author in the South, she did receive a great honor from her home state. Following her return to the South, the Alabama Legislature passed a resolution in 1921, honoring her work and bestowing appreciation for her contributions to the state's culture. She left an extraordinary legacy that surpassed the expectations that most Southerners had set for a lady born in the Antebellum South.

Julia Zitella Cocke was born on November 10, 1840, in the small, yet influential town, of Marion, Alabama, to Woodson St. George and Mary Elizabeth Binion Cocke. Family ties have always been important in Southern culture, and this was especially true for Zitella Cocke. Cocke's family was influential and prosperous, able to obtain public offices and live at the level most often associated with planters of the Old South. Her father was a hotel proprietor and planter in Marion, as well as a member of the prominent

and powerful Cocke family of Virginia.[2] Her mother was of French Huguenot descent and an accomplished scholar, musician, and linguist.[3] Both of her parents migrated west into Alabama, leaving behind the established cities and provinces of the eastern seaboard.

Zitella Cocke was proud of her heritage and related to others her historical lineage in an eloquent manner.[4] She immortalized her prestigious family heritage in several of her poems. She had reason to be proud of that historical lineage, for she descended from powerful and illustrious families. On her mother's side, she was of Huguenot origin and on her father's, a member of the prominent English family of Cocke (or in another spelling Coke).[5] Both families easily trace ancestors back to important historical events throughout Europe and America ranging from wars in England to intellectuals in France and to the formative years of American history. Zitella Cocke's father and uncle came to Marion, Alabama, in the 1830s and at first established a hotel in the town before buying land and becoming large planters in Perry County. Woodson Cocke married Mary Elizabeth Burton Binion in Marion, Alabama, on September 9, 1837. It was in Perry County that Zitella Cocke and her siblings were born.

Marion, Zitella Cocke's hometown, was among the many small communities that rose because of the burgeoning cotton-based economy of Alabama. Small and

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[2] Samuel A. Townes, *The History of Marion, Alabama* (Marion, Ala.: Dennis Dykous, 1844; repr. Birmingham, Ala.: A.H. Cather Publishing Company, 1985), 15.

[3] Thomas McAdory Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography* (Spartanburg, S.C.: The Reprint Company, 1978), 366.

[4] Mary Lula Eborn, "An Appreciation of the Life and Writings of Zitella Cocke" (Master's thesis, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1931), 6.

[5] Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography*, 365-366.

inconspicuous, Marion, Alabama sits on a railroad site in the once prosperous Black Belt region. Today one can take a short drive through town and be reminded of the great wealth and power that once resided in the area. The remnants of Cocke's Old South world remain, but the large homes of wealthy planters and merchants of the Old South are not the only sights that hearken back to the world of Zitella Cocke. The poverty of the failed Confederate States of America and the hardships of the Reconstruction still linger today in Marion, Alabama. The region has never fully recovered from the devastation of the Civil War.

Despite the economic problems of the region, two institutions remain strong in Cocke's hometown: Judson College and Marion Military Institute. The two educational institutions were among five schools established in the nineteenth century in Marion, which also boasted a very rich cultural history during the 1800s. Marion was home to the first *Alabama Baptist* newspaper; Sam Houston's wife Margaret Lea; Alabama Governor Andrew Moore; and the antebellum artist Nicola Marschall. Nicola Marschall was an accomplished painter who produced many exquisite portraits of Marion natives, including Zitella Cocke.[6] Into this vibrant and promising environment, Cocke was born and lived for approximately forty years. The many experiences that she encountered in Marion shaped her character and the subjects of her writings.

As much as her life in Marion shaped her character and writings, Cocke's family

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[6] Alabama Department of Archives and History website, Civil War Flags, www.archives.state.al.us. The website features a description of the life and works of Nicola Marshcall. Nicola Marschall is believed by many to be the designer of the "Stars and Bars" or the first national flag of the Confederate States of America. He also is credited with designing the uniforms of the Confederate military force.

was a greater influence on her life. The prominence and power of family can often make one's path in life easier, but family can also hold a person in a position that they do not desire for themselves. Zitella Cocke did not gain footholds in the literary world through her family's power or wealth but by her own passion and drive. She displayed great pride in her family, often immortalizing the numerous family legends in poetry. She spent many years caring for her family and even when she left to pursue her writing, did not allow the ties with her family to fall to the wayside. The historical and prominent position of her family engendered her with a pride that could not be destroyed by hardship. She was a Cocke and a Binion, and like many other women from elite families, she felt this made her a better person. She never forgot where she came from and not once during her time in Boston did she allow someone to disparage her Southern family and heritage. Family shaped Cocke and made her into the aristocratic, respectable woman who pursued her dreams and achieved worldwide acclaim as a poet and musician.

Zitella Cocke loved her family very much and spent many years caring for her invalid mother and after her parents died, her younger siblings. The most painful death in her family was the murder of her brother, John Binion Cocke. Zitella Cocke saw no wrong in John and his death in the streets of Marion, Alabama, deeply affected her. The subsequent murder trial created a great deal of animosity and anger, especially when many citizens of Marion defamed John's character.[7] The many deaths in the Cocke

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[7] Zitella loved all her siblings greatly, but her feelings in her letters about John almost border on hero worship. John was born five years after Zitella and it is reasonable to expect that she had a close relationship with him, as she did with James Madison, who was born between the two. John survived the Civil War and this surely caused the ties between Zitella and John to strengthen, especially considering the death of Madison during the Battle of Gettysburg. Whether the statements concerning John's character are

family during these years caused her much grief and influenced many of her poems. These tragedies are very important to the study of her life and will be appropriately covered in the thesis.

Zitella Cocke's family extended beyond her parents and siblings, for she also had an aunt, uncle and several cousins living in Marion. Her uncle, Jack Fleming Cocke married Julia Ann Binion in Athens, Georgia, on August 15, 1833. Jack and Julia Cocke were the parents of nine children.[8] Zitella Cocke even attended Judson Female Institute with her cousin, Sarah Jane. Jack Cocke was a prominent merchant and planter in Alabama and by 1845 had undertaken the role of state senator. He served as an Alabama State senator for sixteen years until he was defeated in 1861 by F.S. Lyon. He eventually moved to Mississippi where he resided with his wife until his death.[9] Jack Cocke's family provided Zitella Cocke and her siblings with an extended family and companionship in what was relatively a wilderness during the early and mid nineteenth century.

In keeping with her affluent heritage and family influence, Zitella Cocke began her earliest education under the supervision of her mother. As she grew older, private tutors were employed to supplement her mother's instruction. In 1847, at the age of six, she began her education at Judson Female Institute; she graduated with honors in 1856 at

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true, it is difficult to say since there is little documentation on John outside Zitella's letters and the newspaper accounts of the murder trial.

[8] Virginia Webb Cocke, *Cockes and Cousins, Volume II, Descendants of Thomas Cocke (c. 1639-1697)* (Michigan: Edwards Brothers, 1974), 124.

[9] Owen, *Alabama History and Dictionary of Alabama Biography*, 365. Evidence seems to indicate that Jack's wife, Julia Binion, and Woodson's wife, Mary Binion, are sisters.

the age of sixteen. Judson provided education to girls ranging from primary school to college. There were several levels of classes at Judson and students were evaluated to determine which level they entered. The levels of classes consisted of the following: Primary, Preparatory, Irregular, Junior, Middle, Senior and Resident Graduate.[10] Zitella Cocke received a superb education from her mother and tutors before she entered Judson. For that reason, she was placed in a much higher level than normal, enabling her to graduate from the school at twelve years of age. Like many young ladies of her status, she traveled extensively in Europe and benefited from the musical instruction of some of Europe's finest musicians. When she returned to Marion from Europe, she took a position teaching music at her alma mater to help her family through the difficult war years. Zitella Cocke took up the responsibility of caring for her family during the 1860s and was not able to pursue music and writing for many years. She remained in Marion until the late 1870s caring for her younger sisters after the death of their parents. After her sisters had finished school and married, Cocke was free to leave Marion and Alabama. During the 1880s, she taught at Lake Forest University in Illinois and lived for a short time in Baltimore, Maryland, teaching private music lessons.

During the 1890s, she moved to Boston, Massachusetts, and began to write and publish her many poems, essays, short stories and musical compositions. She wrote lyrical poetry that sings to the reader of exotic places and people; she did not confine herself to writing about one era or place. One could easily find poetry on European kings mixed among prose exuding the charms of Alabama. Her talent did not rest entirely in

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[10] Frances Dew Hamilton and Elizabeth Crabtree Wells, *Daughters of the Dream: Judson College, 1838-1988* (Marion, Ala.: Judson College, 1989), 39.

writing poems, short stories or essays, for she was also an accomplished musician who could play the piano and guitar, sing, and compose music. Even with all of the above, she translated literary works from German and French, which she fluently spoke and read, into English. She remained in Boston for nearly thirty years until her health began to fail and she was urged to return to the South by her doctors. Back in the South, she continued to write despite blindness and ill health. On December 3, 1939, Zitella Cocke died in the Gadsden, Alabama home of her niece Molly Cocke Denman. Her body was returned to her birthplace of Marion, Alabama for burial in the Marion Cemetery.

CHAPTER 1

LIFE IN ANTEBELLUM ALABAMA

When asked to describe life in the Old South, most people imagine the mythical Tara of *Gone with the Wind.* Images of beautiful belles, charming beaux, spacious and elegant columned mansions, and mammies come to mind. As beautiful as this image may be, for most Southerners nothing was further from reality. The fictional life of Scarlett O'Hara represents the smallest percentage of the elite planter class on the eastern coast of the United States. Reality was "harsh epidemics, scorching heat, and hardscrabble living on the border."[11]

So how did the image of Scarlett become so prominent? The answer lies in the post-Civil War rebuilding efforts of the South. The Civil War and the occupation of the South by Northern troops destroyed all that the Southern planter elite had known, and the elite eagerly sought some meaning and reassurance that they were not wrong in their beliefs. White Southerners of the post-Civil War South could not rebuild the region with brick and mortar. Instead, white Southerners began a historical revision that gave birth to the "moonlight and magnolias" legend of the Old South and the gracious, beautiful plantation mistress. The South's massive effort of revising history laid the foundation for the plantation myth that still lingers today.[12]

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[11] Catherine Clinton, *Tara Revisited: Women, War, & the Plantation Legend* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1995), 27.

[12] Ibid., 19.

Southerners refined the image of the plantation mistress, distorting it to personify the grace and ease most white Southerners aspired to in their own lives.[13] This distortion began before the Civil War and continued after Southern defeat. The image of Southern women became an integral part of a social system that shaped the character of the South. The women of the Antebellum South lived in a distinct culture clearly based on gender, class and race relations. That social system was essential in shaping the lives and identities of Southern women. Slavery played a critical role in influencing the entire nature of Southern society and fostered the rural nature that has endured in the South to the present day.[14] The system of slavery also played a role in defining women and their role in the South. White men controlled the region and defined what it meant to be a women and for many, "whatever their personal variations, the self came wrapped in gender. To be an 'I' meant to be a woman as their society defined women. Specifically it meant to be a lady."[15] Thus, Southern women lived under the influence of a restrictive social system that defined the not as individuals but in the preconceived ideas of gender. Those ideas and concepts about women were created and reinforced by men, thus giving men control over their families and society. Men became the center of Southern society and gave secondary roles to women and the slaves that kept the homes and plantations that fueled the South's economy and society.

To be a "lady," as determined by the white men in society, was the most important endeavor of the young ladies of the slave-holding South. They were often

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[13] Ibid, 41.

[14] Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 37-38.

[15] Ibid, 242.

educated in what are considered today the ornamental arts of sewing, music, and art, as well as proper manners and etiquette. The accepted female education attempted to turn out the Southern ideal of ladies, but it did not prepare them for the hardships of plantation life. The myth of the lady formulated by men caused many women of Southern society to ignore the reality of life in the region. Young women believed that to be a true lady meant that they knew how to do everything: embroider, paint, play or sing music, read and write, as well as have a knowledge of several languages. This did not prepare Southern women for the hardships of managing a household, one that consisted not only of their husband and children but also the slave population on the plantation. This education did not prepare them for the trials of the plantation life that eventually became their fate. The belief that women were weak and unable to learn anything that was not ornamental in nature hampered the lives of the women and often caused them pain when they learned the true nature of life.

The aspirations of most Southern ladies were to marry well and live a life filled with lavish entertainment and luxury. For many, however, once married they were immediately thrust into a life filled with hardship and daily duties. It was not unusual for the lady of the plantation to supervise the slaves and run the household, including managing the tasks of growing a garden, blending medicines, dripping candles, spinning thread, weaving cloth, knitting socks, sewing clothes, supervising the fall slaughter of hogs, procuring and curing meats, scouring cooper utensils, preserving vegetables and jams, and churning butter.[16] Life was hard on the plantation, and the mistress of the household was far from the image of Scarlett, who at one point in the book and the

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[16] Clinton, *Tara Revisited*, 41.

movie, was devastated by the roughness of her hands from attending to the fields. Though the hardships were not as exhausting and painful as those experienced by slave women, the plantation mistress was not the fragile, weak creature so often attributed to the Old South.

The immense load of chores and duties required to run a profitable plantation was demanding. In the frontier environment of Alabama, all members of the planter family had some chore or duty to fulfill in order to insure the security and wealth of the family. The plantation mistress did not sit idly reading books and planning parties, she managed the household. She often did not have the high-style luxuries of the low country of her eastern sisters.[17] Life in the frontier was difficult for many families and mistresses of the households accepted the primitive conditions. Most Southern ladies accepted the lack of luxury and stability that was taken for granted by the families in the coastal lands of the Carolinas and Virginia. If they did complain to their husbands, it often concerned excessive discomfort rather than the desire for physical niceties. Carpets were among the most requested items for the home because they served a dual role in enhancing the appearance of the home and provided some insulation from drafts coming up through the floor.[18] Most Southern women accepted the hard life and tried to make life easier for their families by performing their duties and managing a successful household.

Life in the South was a complex web of tasks and cooperation by every family member. Though the young ladies of the planter elite were not expected to work as hard as the slaves or even their mothers, they were expected to perform simple tasks to help

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[17] Fox-Genovese, *The Plantation Mistress*, 107.

[18] Ibid., 107

the family. This cooperation was expected of all and did not end when the family resided in a town. The duties and chores that would have been required of those young ladies living in town rather than on the plantation were lighter, but they still had to participate in the management of the household in some way. All young ladies in the South were educated on the general management of the household by participating in the daily tasks and routines of their mothers.[19] While there is no reason to believe that Zitella Cocke did not help her mother with the household, her comments in letters to Thomas and Marie Owen in Montgomery, Alabama, indicate that she enjoyed a charmed childhood. She felt a deep devotion to her family and spent several years of her life caring for her mother and younger siblings.[20]

Familial ties are important to most people because it provides social interaction and support that most humans need. This was true for the families that migrated into the western frontier into the lands of Alabama, Mississippi and further west. For many "family ties were strong, and even the great mobility of the westward movement did not always diminish them."[21] For those families that moved from the developed eastern coast into the wilderness of the Deep South, ties to family members were cherished, and every attempt was made to keep them strong. It was not unusual for young Southern women to

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[19] Ibid., 110.

[20] Letters by Zitella Cocke to the Thomas and Marie Owen, Zitella Cocke Papers, LPR 161, ADAH. The series of correspondence between Zitella and the Owens arose out of Thomas Owen's search for information on prominent Alabamians for his book, *Alabama History and Dictionary of Alabama Biography.*

[21] Anne Firor Scott, *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 43.

marry and move hundreds of miles from the comforts and security of the home and family they had known to endure the hardships of plantation management and isolation from the social circles of city life. For many families, especially the women, every chance visit and letter received from someone from their childhood home was greeted with excitement and appreciation. On the other hand, some families who took the road west brought with them other branches of their family and began anew in the new land.[22] This was true for Zitella Cocke's family who had established themselves in Marion before her birth. When she was born, she had an extended family of an uncle, aunt and cousins that afforded her company and social opportunities. The strong familial ties were important to her early in her life, and she often demonstrated her love for her family through her writings and in the time spent caring for her family.

Her mother, Mary Elizabeth Burton Binion Cocke, was born in 1820 to John and Mary Cook Binion of Clarke County, Georgia.[23] The Binion family traces its roots back to France and the Huguenots. Mary Cocke was related to the Marquis La Force and the Marquis de Binion. The La Force and Binion families were French noblemen and followers of Henri Quatre of the House of Valois. Once the Edict of Nantes was repealed in France during the sixteenth century, her family moved to England and Wales to avoid prosecution in their homeland.

The Binion family excelled in scholarly pursuits, and the family boasted many intellectuals who pursued careers in literature and chemistry. Cocke proudly owned a

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[22] Ibid., 43.

[23] William Ronald Cocke, Jr., The Cocke Family of Virginia and Georgia: To Which is Appended Notes on the Strong Family of Virginia and Georgia, Mostly from Original Sources (Columbia, Va.: Genealogical Compilation, 1932), 15. (Hereafter cited as "The Cocke Family of Virginia and Georgia").

poem written by a great-great grandmother in the Binion family. The poem titled "A Ma Guiltarre" was written in French and she often amused herself by reading and translating the verse.[24] Zitella Cocke often boasted of the intellectual pursuits of the Binion family and described her relatives as lovers of knowledge. The family definitely lived up to that description and counted among its ranks, poets, musicians, librarians, and a chemist.

One cousin was Laurence Binion, who held a position in the British Museum and was a poet.[25] Another cousin, Samuel Binion, was a native of Switzerland and a collector of antiquities. Cocke greatly admired her cousin for his intellectual talents but describes him a giant, fossil looking man. She remembers a visit from him while she lived in Boston. When she entered the parlor, he lifted both hands and exclaimed "Ah, c'est Binion que je vois!" (Ah, it is a Binion that I see). He thought that she resembled the Binions of Switzerland and Wales.[26] Samuel Binion was renowned for his mastery of several modern and classic languages, as well as his desire to collect ancient manuscripts. The Czar of Russia offered him a position formerly held by his father at the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, but he refused on the grounds that he wished to devote himself to his study of antiquities.[27] Besides collecting manuscripts and studying languages, Samuel Binion also lectured at colleges and universities such as Johns Hopkins and Harvard,

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[24] Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Thomas Owen, Montgomery, Ala., February 3, circa 1900s, Zitella Cocke Papers, LPR 161, ADAH.

[25] Eborn, An Appreciation of the Life and Writings of Zitella Cocke, 6.

[26] Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Thomas Owen, Montgomery, Ala., February 3, circa 1900s, Zitella Cocke Papers, LPR 161, ADAH.

[27] Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography*, 366.

where he lectured on the Hebrew language.[28] He also published at least one book titled, *The Restoration of Thebes, Karnack, and Babylon*, that is in the collections of several libraries in the United States and in Europe. Literature was not the only pursuit of the Binion family, however, for there was also a chemist. Zitella Cocke's granduncle was said to have been one of Paris' greatest scientists at one time and was a member of one of the scientific academies in France.[29] The Binion family, as demonstrated above, claimed many illustrious intellectuals and set the stage for the love of literary pursuits instilled in Zitella Cocke by her mother.

Not to be out done by the family of Mary Binion Cocke, the Cocke family traced its history back to the Norman invasion of England. Family legend says that the first Cocke ancestor in England was a Norman officer in the Battle of Hastings. Throughout English history, members of the Cocke family could be found in the landed gentry and counted themselves among the gallant soldiers of the English crown. One account says that during the reign of the King Charles I, the Cocke family was among the Royalists who fought for the king. In this account Colonel Cocke, a member of the army of Charles I, was told by the officers of Cromwell's army that "Your King is taken! Your King is taken!" in an effort to secure his surrender. But instead Colonel Cocke lifted his sword and said, "Then am I his more than ever, his in defeat even more than in victory. Take my sword if you can, I will never surrender it."[30] The Cocke family established and

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[28] Ibid, 366.

[29] Eborn, An Appreciation of the Life and Writings of Zitella Cocke, 6.

[30] Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography*, 366. Zitella Cocke corresponded with Thomas Owen and his wife Marie in preparation of this book. She recounted the stories of the Cocke and Binion families in those letters and the stories used in Owen's book are verbatim from the

distinguished itself in England, but the desire for adventure led Sir Richard Cocke to the New World.

Sir Richard Cocke founded the family in America when he settled in the British colony of Virginia in the early 1600s. He first came to America as the purser of the ship *Thomas and John* and he demonstrated an interest in shipping throughout his life. It seems that he engaged in trade with the West Indies and most likely acquired great wealth for the family. By the 1630s he resigned from the life of a mariner and received his estate of three thousand acres named "Bremo," from the colonial government in 1636, and by 1639 he was given the "Malvern Hills" estate of two thousand acres. Though he gave up shipping, Sir Richard Cocke continued to establish himself in the New World and was a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses, as well as holding the position of County Commander in Henrico County where his vast estate was situated.[31] Sir Richard Cocke set the stage for his American descendants and provided the wealth, power, and prominence long associated with the family. General Robert E. Lee mentions members of the Cocke family in his published letters.[32] The family distinguished itself during the Civil War and at least one member, Philip St. George Cocke, held the position of colonel and served with General "Stonewall" Jackson.[33] Many members of the family went on to become members of the Virginia House of Burgesses, as Sir Richard Cocke had, and

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Cocke letters. The stories of the Cocke family are more interesting and numerous as there seems to be more information about the family.

[31] William Ronald Cocke, The Cocke Family of Virginia and Georgia, 1-2.

[32] Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography*, 366.

[33] James I. Robertson, Jr. *Stonewall Jackson: The Man, The Soldier, The Legend* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1997), 103.

distinguished themselves in military, political and social positions throughout the South. The family aligned itself well socially through marriages with other prominent families, including the Flemings and Madisons.[34] This alliance with the two families can be seen in the numerous uses of Fleming and Madison in the names of children, Zitella Cocke had a brother named Madison and another named Fleming.

In the 1630s, Sir Richard Cocke was granted large tracts of land in Virginia that fostered the growth of the family until the end of the eighteenth century. "Bremo" remained in the family until the Revolutionary War when the family moved to Cumberland County in Virginia. "Bremo" was a three-thousand acre plantation situated in the southeastern corner of Hemrico County, the land being some of the most fertile in the region. Unfortunately many of the buildings on the estate have long since been destroyed, though the cemetery in which Sir Richard Cocke and several of his family are interred still exists though in a state of disrepair.[35] "Bremo's" sister estate of "Malvern Hills" was a beautiful estate of two-thousand acres overlooking "Bremo" and the James River. The family occupied it until the eighteenth century when James Powell Cocke

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[34] Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography*, 366. The Cocke family was linked through marriage to the Fleming family. The Fleming branch of the family could be traced back to England and the Earl of Angus. The Earl's youngest son was the first member of the family to settle in America and it is from his family that Dolly Madison was descended. The Cocke family repeatedly used Fleming and Madison when naming children.

[35] Cocke, The Cocke Family of Virginia and Georgia, 5. The Cocke family lived in several counties in Virginia, among which were Henrico, Ablemarle, Cumberland and Goochland. In every county in which the Cocke's settled the family obtained large tracts of land and served in several political offices.

acquired the "Edgemont" estate in Albemarle County.[36] The main house was nestled in a spacious yard and considered a fine specimen of colonial architecture that was unfortunately destroyed by fire. Like many other Virginia estates, "Malvern Hills" was a busy plantation during the colonial period, with its grist and corn mill, flour mill, tanneries, looms, and mercantile store, as well as the obvious fields and gardens often associated with Southern plantations. For entertainment the estate boasted a racecourse where the country gentry often gathered and participated in races. The estate offered the Cocke family entertainment and wealth, but "Malvern Hills" also hosted several historical incidents.

During the Revolutionary War, the "Malvern Hills" estate witnessed the British Redcoats moving across it and at one time hosted the headquarters of General Lafayette. The War of 1812 also visited the estate when the enemies of the American government set up headquarters on the grounds. The most recognized military incident occurred during the Civil War when a bloody battle between the troops of General John Magruder and the army of General McClellan met at "Malvern Hills."[37] The estate thus played an important role not only in the lives of the Cocke family, also in the lives of Americans

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[36] Ibid., 3-4. James Cocke's home at "Edgemont" was a solid brick structure covered with weatherboarding and reputed to have been designed by a kinsman, Thomas Jefferson. The design was similar to Jefferson's "Monticello," which was built many years later.

[37] Cocke, The Cocke Family of Virginia and Georgia, 3-4.; A.L. Long, *Memoirs of Robert E. Lee, His Military and Personal History Embracing A Large Amount of Information Hitherto Unpublished* (Edison, N.J.: Blue and Grey Press, 1983), 176; Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 499-505. The book by Long includes an account of the Malvern Hills battle as related by General Lee. The Robertson book also includes an account of the battle on the former Cocke estate.

and the history of the infant nation.

It was from the fertile and established land of Virginia that Jack Fleming Cocke moved to Georgia with several other Virginia families. In 1807, records show he married a daughter of one the Virginia families with whom he traveled south. Jack Fleming Cocke and his wife Sally Strong were the parents of four sons: William S. Cocke, David P. Cocke, Jack Fleming Cocke and Woodson Cocke.[38] The two brothers, Jack and Woodson Cocke eventually moved west to Alabama and both married into the Binion family.[39] During the early 1830s Jack and Woodson Cocke left Clarke County, Georgia, and established themselves in Marion, Alabama, where they rose in prominence and power.

Alabama, essentially a wilderness when Jack and Woodson arrived, had only became a state in 1819. The land had been the home of Native American tribes for centuries, and it took the United States policy of Indian Removal to seize control of and settle the land in the Deep South. Life was hard in the early decades of statehood and all Alabamians, white and black, fought hard against the elements to forge out of the frontier functioning communities and plantations. During Alabama's infancy, most settlers focused primarily on clearing the dense woodlands that covered the region and constructing the homes and communities that would support the population. The settlers

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[38] Cocke, The Cocke Family of Virginia and Georgia, 14. As mentioned earlier, the Cocke family often used names from affiliated families. Jack Fleming Cocke (Zitella's uncle) received his middle named from the Fleming family. The Cocke's also used names repeatedly, making it difficult to distinguish between generations. William, David, Fleming, Jack and Madison occur several times in the genealogy of the family.

[39] Virginia Webb Cocke, *Cockes and Cousins, Volume II, Descendants of Thomas Cocke*, 124.

had to clear the land, build homes and fences for the fields, till the rich, black soil, and produce food for the family. As the population increased, opportunities to pursue commercial interests also grew. The population became a little less isolated and more communities were developed. As cotton began to dominate Alabama's economy the culture and society of the antebellum South blossomed into the reign of King Cotton.[40] White settlers also focused on creating a political and educational system for the state. By laying these foundations early, the white elite was able to move the state from frontier living to a strong society with enduring cultural resources.[41]

Marion and Perry County were founded shortly after statehood was conferred upon Alabama. Marion grew at a very slow rate in its first decades because of the populace's uncertainty of the permanence of the county seat in the town and the quality of the soil for farming. An 1828 state law requiring a two thirds vote of the legislature to change any county seats or boundaries encouraged growth in Marion, as well as in many other towns across the state. Local concerns over the health and fertility of the region were proven wrong. The land was especially rich and adaptable for the cultivation of cotton. Many believed the soil was barren and the topsoil too wet, and that the low-hanging mist that lingered in the area was the sickly "swamp gas" or "miasma" that would cause fevers and illnesses such as malaria. Once the concerns over the land and climate were resolved, planters began digging wells to solve water problems and establishing large parcels of land for cultivation. With the cotton crops came greater

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[40] William Warren Rogers, Robert David Ward, Leah Rawls Atkins, and Wayne Flynt, *Alabama: The History of a Deep South State* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1994), 97.

[41] Ibid., 93.

wealth that lent itself to a highly developed social order, produced new social problems, supported of human slavery and, in the end, supported of the Confederate government and the Civil War to maintain the social and economic system.[42]

Cotton dominated the economy of counties and towns of central Alabama and gave new life to the system of slavery that had already existed in the United States. The deep, rich soil of the Black Belt fostered the growth of cotton and the plantations financed by the crop. As the early planters increased their wealth and power, the number of plantations exploded in the region. As defined by most historians and the planters themselves, a plantation was the land itself, not the buildings. Plantations were often self-sufficient, thereby enabling the planter to feed his family and slaves. Though much of the land was devoted to cultivating cotton, there were also planned sections for gardens and other uses. This self-sufficiency allowed the profits of the plantation to be reinvested in cotton or allowed the planter to provide more luxuries for his family. It did not take long for the plantation system to tie itself to the government and economy of Alabama, and to the cultural identity of the people.[43] Marion grew rapidly as the plantation system inundated central Alabama and was entirely tied to and identified with cotton plantations. Marion's citizens enjoyed the benefits of great wealth, and the town was home to the impressive homes of those benefiting from large land ownership and the cash crop of cotton. The plantation system benefited Marion and elite families, such as the Cockes and the Kings.

The King family of Perry County was among the largest landowners of the

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[42] Ibid., 31-35.

[43] Ibid., 95-97.

region. The King's accumulated great wealth and prosperity during the boom of the cotton economy and were typical of planters in Marion and the surrounding county. The family operated numerous plantations in the county and required the use of overseers, even though the King's would ride out to check on the operations. They also required the labor of hundreds of slaves who spent the entire year performing maintenance and agricultural tasks. Farming was not the only job of field slaves; they spent much of the year maintaining the land and buildings the plantation. They repaired roads; removed and burned logs, trash and brush; dug ditches; and plowed under, pulled up or burned remaining plant stalks in the fields. Work on plantations, as any farmer will say about farming today, did not end with the crop growing and gathering seasons.[44]

Cotton was planted April through May and during March through April slaves planted the plantation's gardens. In between the planting and harvesting of cotton, slaves performed the varied tasks of maintaining the fields and gardens, cured meats, and ran spinning wheels and looms to produce cloth. Cotton picking would begin in late August or early September. Afterwards the cotton would be ginned and shipped by wagon or flatboat to river towns like Cahaba, and was then sent by boats down the Alabama River to Mobile to the cotton factors. The cotton factors in Mobile were responsible for selling the crop and reconciling the bills incurred by the King family for financing the plantation's operations.[45] Like other planters in Perry County, the Kings planted and raised several other crops, and livestock to help the plantations maintain some self-

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[44] Jordan, Weymouth T., *Antebellum Alabama: Town and Country* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama, 1957), 54-55.

[45] Ibid., 48-49.

sufficiency, but many items were still bought. Materials like cotton bagging, rope, twine, iron, tin, axes, tools, medicines, shoes, candles, nails, household furniture, dry goods, flour and other staples, books and liquor were purchased through agents, mostly located in Mobile. Prices for the many items required to maintain a plantation were published in Mobile's *Price-Current* and provided planters with information on the many materials they needed.[46] Mobile played an essential role in providing the materials that enhanced the lives of the planters and the plantations they supported because it was a port and had ready access to shipping lines.

Wealthy planters, like Woodson Cocke and the King family, preferred to have a residence in a local town and leave the plantation in the hands of an overseer. Absentee planters would often ride out to their plantations and check the operations, and if they owned plantations further than a day's ride, they would keep residences on the land. Though most planters were isolated on their individual plantations, some like Woodson Cocke, held the financial means to purchase a house in a local town and obtain reputable overseers to maintain their plantations. It took a great deal of money and time to run several plantations and maintain a home in town. Only the wealthiest percentage of the white elite were able to be absentee planters and even Woodson Cocke lived for many years on his plantation before purchasing a home in Marion.[47] Once the home in town

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[46] Ibid., 47.

[47] Zitella Cocke and her family lived outside Marion's city limits until she was at least 16 years of age. Whether Cocke resided in Marion during her attendance at Judson Female Institute is unknown, but the family moved to Marion the year in which she graduated from the school. Woodson Cocke purchased their house in Marion in 1856 after Reverend DeVotie left his post as minister of Siloam Baptist Church. Though there is no documentation of where the Cocke plantation house stood, Zitella Cocke did indicate in

was purchased, the Cockes were able to provide more opportunities and social interaction for their children and themselves. Wealthy planters, like the Cockes, could ease the burden on their families and locate nearer to churches and educational opportunities for their children by residing in the small communities dotting the landscape.

Locating near a church held an additional benefit for families that were isolated in the rural South because the church offered them social encounters outside their own households and provided some basis for the enforcement of social relations and behaviors for the society.[48] Religion in the South influenced and shaped the lives and cultural identity of the region and its populace. Several of Cocke's poems stress the importance of religion in her life. Religion gave her strength in the moments of grief that plagued her throughout her life. Most Southern women living on the frontier and experiencing the destruction war wrought on the land obtained the needed strength and support from their religious beliefs and churches. Religion in the South did not progress as it did in the northern states because the restrictive social system and slavery-based economy required concessions to be made in the beliefs held by many religions. Sermons in white churches, especially those where slaves attended, stressed the importance of obedience and often overlooked the concept of man's brotherhood with one another. Focusing on the values most important to maintaining the system of slavery helped planters preserve their way of life. Religion thus adapted itself to the "high culture and high politics" of

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a letter to Edmund Stedman that she grew up on a plantation (Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Edmund C. Stedman, Bronnville, N.Y., June 8, 1897, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University Library). The date when the DeVotie house was purchased supports the belief that the Cockes lived outside Marion.

[48] Fox-Genovese, *The Plantation Mistress*, 44.

Southern society.

As the number, power, and wealth of planters increased, so grew the power and wealth of Marion, and it became a local trade center for some of the largest planters in Alabama. Because cotton and the slave labor used in its production were the mainstay of Marion's economy, the town became the home of several lawyers and the site of an extensive legal business in the purchase of land and slaves. The planters built large homes in the town and operated their vast land holdings in the country surrounding Marion.[49] By the time Zitella Cocke was born in 1840, Marion boasted nine preachers, six doctors of medicine, three botanic or steam doctors, fifteen lawyers, two resident dentists, one barber, two taverns, eight dry goods stores, and at least two each of the standard shops for blacksmithing, cabinetry, livery stables, tailors, and printing.[50] Marion had been a transportation center in the region. As the terminus for the Cahaba and Marion Railroad and two stage lines, it had several bridges and a connection to the Alabama River system. The river system gave Marion access to a variety of information even though the town had no local newspaper until 1839.[51]

Besides the basic shops that catering to the needs of a growing community, Marion was also the home to two schools for ladies and a school for young men. By 1842, Marion was a leading educational center in the state boasting the three schools: Marion Female Seminary, The Judson Female Institute and Howard College. Teachers from various sections of the United States and Europe moved to Marion to work at

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[49] Ibid., 37.

[50] Townes, *The History of Marion, Alabama*, 33-34.

[51] Jordan, *Antebellum Alabama: Town and Country*, 36-37.

Judson, the female school established by the Baptists of the town. Judson's professors brought with them new ideas and customs and helped affect the social aspects of the town.[52] Despite the influx of people and the new ideas and customs they brought, Marion remained unsophisticated. There was conflict between those with little interest in enlightenment and those striving to establish a society fashioned after communities in the east. Marion began to make advancements in the cultural environment of the people with the three educational institutions and immigrants from the eastern states and Europe leading the effort to improve the town.[53] The people of Marion quickly established themselves and the town as a power base of the region. Marion's power and influence was evident in 1846, when the town was among Montgomery's rivals for the honor of being named the new state capitol. The wealth created by the cotton plantations helped Marion become a powerhouse in the region and allowed it to expand the social, educational and cultural opportunities of its citizenry. Cocke was born into the promising environment of this influential and growing Black Belt town.

Julia Zitella Cocke was born on November 10, 1840, and she entered the world with all the promises and opportunities offered by wealth. She was soon followed by seven siblings, listed in order as follows: James Madison, 1842-1864; John Binion, 1845-1893; Mary (Molly) W., 1846 or 1847-1903; Fleming, 1850-1899; Effie, 1852-1907; Zoe, 1855-1856; and Norma, 1857-1859.[54] Her father was a prominent member of Marion society as was her uncle, Jack Fleming Cocke, a long-time Alabama senator who

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[52] Ibid., 38-39.

[53] Ibid,, 37.

[54] Ibid., 124.

served during Tuscaloosa's tenure as the state capitol. Woodson and Jack traveled together from Georgia to the infant state of Alabama during the 1830s. The two brothers were close and built their wealth together. By having their families live near one another, Woodson and Jack offered their children an extended family that many Southerners did not have.

Woodson and Jack first made a living in Marion by operating a hotel situated on the site of an old tavern and inn owned by Ann Smith, an early settler in Marion. The hotel boasted a ballroom used by the "dancing academy" operated by J.S. Simmons in the 1840s. An advertisement for the academy stated that "the most fashionable steps and figures will be taught."[55] After a few years as proprietors of the hotel, the Cocke brothers left the business to devote themselves to their Hamburg area plantations.[56] Woodson quickly bought land and by 1858 owned 2,420 acres in Perry County.[57] With such large acreage, Woodson was able to support his family very well and establish himself in Marion society.

Woodson Cocke was a prominent citizen of the town and held the respect of many Marion residents, especially in the King and Lea families. Judge E.D. King once stated that Woodson was "the truest friend any man ever knew – nothing shook him if he was your friend!"[58] Henry Lea, a close family friend, requested that Woodson help his family

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[55] W. Stuart Harris, *Perry County Heritage,* (Marion, Ala.: Perry County Historical and Preservation Society, 1991), 106-107.

[56] Townes, *The History of Marion, Alabama*, 15; Harris, *Perry County Heritage*, 106-107.

[57] Perry County Tax Assessors Records, LG 3323, ADAH, 51-52 and 107.

[58] Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Marie B. Owen, Montgomery, Ala., September 15, circa 1910s, Zitella Cocke Papers, LPR 161, ADAH.

after his death. Woodson did so faithfully by providing a plentiful food supply for the Lea family during the winter months when none could be grown in the garden.[59] This generosity was repaid to the Cocke family through the enduring friendship between the two families. The Lea family did not forget the help Woodson gave to his friends and they aided the Cocke family during the illness and death of Woodson. Cocke remembered Mrs. Henry Lea taking her to hear Basil Manly preach at Siloam Baptist Church at the age of nine.[60] The Lea and Cocke families formed a strong friendship and letters from Sumter Lea to Cocke indicate that they knew each very well. Friendships like the one between the Lea and Cocke families were important to Southerners and helped families survive the hardships of Southern life.

Life was difficult in the Deep South. Most families lived isolated from others on vast acreage of plantations and farms scattered throughout the region. When people imagine plantation life, they often envision scenes from *Gone With the Wind.* The truth was that few Southerners enjoyed the ease and leisure of visits and barbeques, which were more like annual events because most plantations were isolated. Those in the elite planter class, who owned property in cities and towns infrequently dotting the Southern landscape, were able to enjoy more visits, balls and parties than their rural counterpoints. The great majority of the white Southern population, however, lived on and maintained their farms and plantations year round. It was difficult work and it was even more difficult to make a profit. The South of *Gone With the Wind* required an enormous labor

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[59] Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Marie B. Owen, Montgomery, Ala., February 16, circa 1910s, Zitella Cocke Papers, LPR 161, ADAH.

[60] Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Louise Manly, Marion, Ala., June, circa 1900s, Zitella Cocke Manuscripts, Judson College Archives.

force and few Southerners were able to acquire the land and labor to live like the O'Hara's and Wilkes'. Besides the isolation that existed and the work that was needed to maintain the plantations, the climate of the South was extreme and unpredictable and affected all aspects of Southern life.

The climate in the South was very difficult to live in and often presented problems for the general health of the people and the crops they cultivated. The extreme temperatures, humidity, and sporadic rainfall during the summer months affected the people and the land. Another hazard of the land was the prevalence of disease that attacked all Southerners, black or white. They faced deadly illnesses ranging from malaria, yellow fever, influenza, and cholera and could only hope for the best once they were infected. The Cocke family did not escape the hardships of the Southern climate, Cocke's mother was often ill, and her father fell ill at their home in Marion during the Civil War. The family also lost two little girls to diphtheria. Zitella Cocke spent much of her life caring for her family and supporting her younger siblings, especially after her father fell ill. In one letter to Louise Manly, Cocke recounts a trip taken to Havana, Cuba, on the recommendation of doctors to help improve the health of her mother.[61] The family most likely took many trips like the one mentioned above, as a means of recovery from the illnesses that her mother so often suffered. Trips to warmer and more tropical climates were often recommended by doctors for those suffering from a variety of diseases, and in some cases the trips relieved the symptoms and suffering of the patient. The trips taken by the Cocke family helped Mary for a while, but illness always returned

[61] Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Louise Manly, Marion, Ala., June circa 1900s, Zitella Cocke Manuscripts, Judson College Archives.

and her oldest daughter, Zitella, was left to care for bother her mother and siblings.

Despite the time she spent caring for her family, Cocke received an education. When asked at what age she first learned to read, she could not remember a time that she could not read music or books. She knew her alphabet, musical notes and reading at least by the age of six. Education was important to the Cocke family and all the children studied with tutors or graduated from one of the schools in Marion.

By the time she entered into Judson Female Institute at the age of six, she was reading from the fourth book of *Aeneid* in Latin. Her intellectual abilities enabled her to graduate with honors from Judson at the age of sixteen.

The importance of education in the family can be traced to her mother's background and heritage. Mrs. Cocke was not fond of Marion and often described the town as filled with vulgar people. Mary Cocke was raised in what was considered the more civilized area of Georgia and held a fortune independent of Woodson.[62] Life in Marion was very difficult for Mary and she sought to provide her children with the benefits of civilized society. She taught the children a variety of subjects including music and Latin. Music was especially important in the family, with three daughters developing into talented musicians. Cocke described her sisters as delightful singers; both eventually settled in Chicago, Illinois, and continued their musical pursuits. One of her early memories of music was her mother playing Beethoven on the piano accompanied by Nicola Marschall on the violin.[63] Zitella Cocke loved music and spent many years

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[62] Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Louise Manly, Marion, Ala., letter June 16, circa 1900s, Zitella Cocke Manuscripts, Judson College Archives.

[63] Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Marie B. Owen, Montgomery, Ala., September 15, circa 1910s, Zitella Cocke Papers, LPR 161, ADAH.

teaching in colleges and privately. She sang beautifully and played the piano and guitar. Though music was considered an ornamental art, after the Civil War it provided for the Cocke family when Cocke supported her mother and siblings by teaching in the music department of Judson, eventually rising to the position of principal. Mary shaped her children into the genteel adults expected of a family with the bloodlines from which she and Woodson originated, as well as provided them with a means of support in their lives through an extensive education. Mary Cocke's focus on education was an attempt to raise her children above the crudeness of the people and town of Marion.

Cocke's mother was a woman of rare ability and taught her children to read both literature and music. Zitella Cocke's talent for and love of music can be found in her mother, who was also able to play the piano. The home of the Cocke family was likely filled with such musical activity and all three daughters possessed great musical talent. There is no doubt where Cocke's love of music and literature originated from, but the family's wealth opened the doors for her pursuits in music and literature. For those subjects that Mary Cocke could not teach, private tutors were hired to provide the instruction. When Cocke would write down verses and send them with her mother's breakfast plate, Mary would correct the grammar and return the verses to her daughter. Zitella Cocke remembered standing before her mother and reciting verses from Wordsworth and Shelley. Once when reciting verses to her mother, she recited a line that read "Drinks me only with thine eyes" and this baffled her and she asked her mother how someone could drink with their eyes.[64] At six years of age, Cocke was taken by her nurse

[64] Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Marie B. Owen, Montgomery, Ala., September 15, circa 1910s, Zitella Cocke Papers, LPR 161, ADAH. Zitella used "Drinks" instead of Drink in the letter.

to Judson Female Institute and during that visit she read a lesson from *McGuffey's 4th Reader* before the teacher and the class. She exhibited her intellectual ability early, and it is not surprising that she would enter Judson Female Institute at the age of six and graduate with honors at sixteen. Cocke, however, believed that she should not have graduated do young and her mother felt it was a shame that a young girl who had never worn a long skirt should have a diploma.[65] Woodson Cocke on the other was very proud of his daughter and wanted to send to a school in the North. However, Dr. Barron, the family's physician, felt Cocke was too young to live in the North's cold climate. Dr. Barron's fears for Cocke's health and the illness suffered by her mother kept Cocke from attending school in the North.[66] Woodson and Jack Cocke's daughters attended Judson Female Institute to complete their educations. The Cocke family was fortunate to have lived near two excellent female seminaries, because many rural areas of Alabama did not have schools, and affluent families were forced to send their daughters to Northern schools or abroad to Europe.

During the nineteenth century the education of middle-to upper-class women became important to Americans. By educating women, fathers hoped to make their daughters into desirable wives. Men defined what was appropriate to be taught to girls. Education developed differently in the South, as compared to the North were "Dame

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[65] Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Louise Manly, Marion, Ala., June circa 1900s, Zitella Cocke Manuscripts, Judson College Archives.

[66] Ibid.

Schools" was the preferred form of education.[67] In the isolated South, "Old Field Schools" were established to accommodate the educational needs of the upper-class planter families.[68] The isolation put education in the hands of the local community. Unfortunately community education proved inadequate for most affluent families of the South. The wealthy often sent their daughters to Europe to be schooled in the "ornamental" arts. These lessons included penmanship, drawing, dancing, painting and needlepoint. An education in Europe carried many benefits, but only the most affluent and wealthy families, like the Cocke's, were able to send their daughters abroad. For example, Zitella Cocke benefited from a European tour where she took music lessons from musical masters. To make education more accessible to the less affluent, Southerners often formed their own schools with religious denominations taking the lead.

Alabama Baptists, despite their conservative tendencies, took an enlightened view of formal education for women. The Baptists, like the Methodists and other Christian denominations, decided to establish schools for both men and women. By doing so, they hoped to provide educational opportunities for communities and to indoctrinate students in the customs and beliefs of the denomination. It was on the solid foundation of the Baptist religion that Judson and later Howard College were founded in Marion, Alabama.

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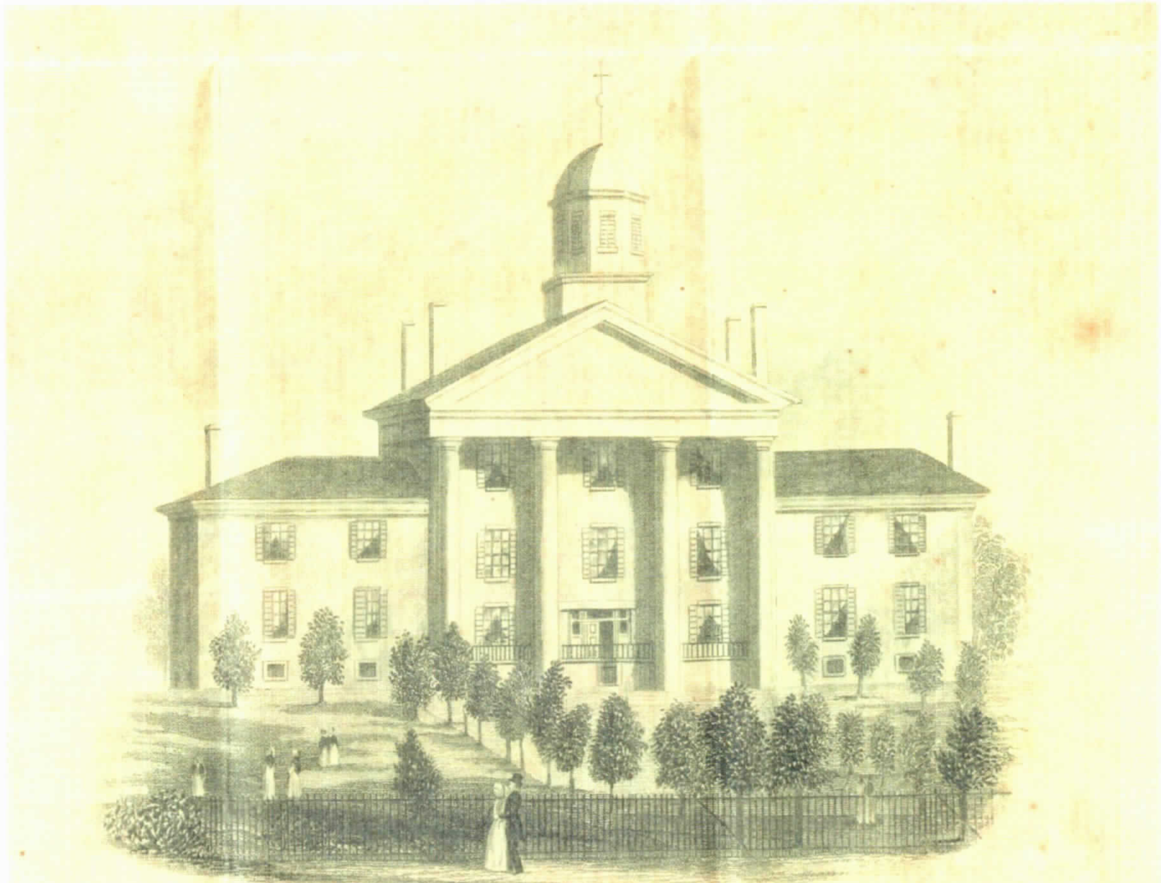
[67] "Dame Schools" were small private schools that provided education to working class children before they were old enough to work. Most "Dame Schools" were run by elderly women who taught the basics of reading and writing, as well as useful skills like sewing.

[68] "Old Field Schools" were community schools set up by planters and merchants to educate their children and those of neighbors. The schools often taught daughters alongside their brothers, if they were not educated by a governess. The instruction at "Old Field Schools" was provided by an educated tutor and included the rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic, and the classics such as Latin.



JUDSON FEMALE INSTITUTE, MARION, ALA.

Judson Female Institute arose out of Marion, Siloam Baptist Church and the dreams of three people – Julia Tarrant Barron, Dr. Milo P. Jewett and General Edwin Davis King. Founded in 1838, the school operated out of a building rented to the school by Julia T. Barron until a permanent structure was built. The first class consisted of nine students, three of which were boys. Milo P. Jewett was an established educator who provided the academic credentials needed to attract pupils and lend creditability to the young Judson Female Institute. He was employed as the first principal of the school and set the high standards for the school. General King provided the money and capital required to finance the school's growth; he and his son later served as board members. As the news of the opening of a female school in Marion, Alabama, spread, the attendance quickly grew and by the next year forty-seven students enrolled. With increasing enrollment, the need for a permanent and adequate home for the school became a pressing issue. By the time Zitella Cocke was born, the board of trustees had secured a site and had begun construction of a permanent building. The new building was a four-storied, red-bricked edifice designed after the popular Greek Revival style, with four massive Doric columns lining the portico, two three-storied wings, and crowned by a cupola. With a permanent home, Judson began publishing catalogs, hiring professors, and acquiring books for the library. [69] With a new building and a larger staff, Judson offered more opportunities for boarding students and expanded its course offerings and services.

Judson and its male counterpart, Howard College, were both founded by the Alabama Baptists and the Siloam Baptist Church in Marion. Because the schools

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[69] Hamilton and Wells, *Daughters of the Dream*, 30-34.

represented the denomination, they both operated under strict regulations, but Judson governed its students much more rigorously than Howard. The difference in regulations reflected Judson's desire to maintain the virtue and humility of the girls. The girls lived under the constant supervision of a governess and the faculty. The boarding students were required to study every night until nine o'clock. Attendance at chapel and church was mandatory for every student. Judson established an uniform code of dress for the young ladies that would identify them as students of the school. The uniform also circumvented competition between students and required a certain dress for each season, such as green merino for winter, pink calico for summer and a Sunday dress of white muslin. An example of the dress code found in the Judson catalogue for 1851 follows:

> DRESS: To promote habits of economy and simplicity, a UNIFORM DRESS is prescribed.
>
> For winter, it is a DARK GREEN WORSTED. Of this fabric, each young lady should have *three* Dresses, *with three sacks of the same* – one of the sacks to be large and wadded.
>
> For summer, each Pupil should have *two Pink Calico, two Pink Gingham*, and *two common White Dresses*, with *one Swiss Muslin*. Also, *one Brown Linen Dress*. Every Dress should be accompanied *by a Sack of the same material.*[70]

The students could own straw bonnets, aprons and other items that complied with the regulations. As fashions changed, so did the required wardrobe, but the three colors of

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[70] A. Elizabeth Taylor, "Regulations Governing Student Life at the Judson Female Institute During the Decade Preceding the Civil War," *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 3 (Spring 1941), 23.

green, pink and white remained the same.[71]

Judson expected its students to maintain decorum at all times. The behavior of the students reflected on themselves, their family and the school. Marks for deportment and behavior were recorded and often announced the next day as a means of correcting lapses. Judson also regulated the activities of the boarding students, requiring them to perform certain tasks. For example, the students were required to begin the day by reading the Bible, singing a hymn and saying a prayer. Leisure time on weekends for the boarding students was restricted, with required time spent on writing letters to their families. Letter writing was considered an academic endeavor and a well-written letter served a dual purpose, the students communicated to the families and demonstrated the quality of education provided by Judson. The governess read the letters before they were mailed, thus insuring that they exhibited the desired qualities. Ventures into town were chaperoned and purchases by students were scrutinized to insure that the allowances of the students were not squandered on foolish or restricted material.[72] By setting such strict regulations for its students, Judson hoped to turn out ladies and insure the purity and innocence that Southern society required of its women.

During the years that Zitella Cocke attended Judson, the school refined its curriculum and employed a greater number of and better-educated instructors. Pupils in the primary course of study learned reading, writing, arithmetic, geography and sciences. Preparatory students studied English, mathematics, grammar, and Greek and Roman

[71] Ibid., 48.

[72] Ibid., 50. There is little information on the regulations for day students. It is probable that they had to abide by the same regulations for deportment and dress as the boarders.

history. Juniors went on to study French or Latin, botany, natural philosophy, geography, grammar, arithmetic and elocution. The Middle Class studied a foreign language and elocution, as well as physiology, chemistry, universal history and algebra. The Senior Class courses included logic, rhetoric, moral science, philosophy, economy, geometry and a foreign language. These courses were supplemented with the "ornamental branches" of needlework or embroidery, drawing, painting, waxwork, and music. Music was always found in any female school and Judson developed one of the finest music programs in the region.[73] As these courses indicate, Judson sought to teach the subjects that would provide the young ladies with a classical and "ornamental" education so desired by Southern society.

The subjects taken by Judson students enabled them to better perform their duties as wives, mothers and daughters, but unfortunately it also sheltered them from the harsh realities of Southern life. For many young ladies the ornamental and classical education would not directly benefit them in their daily duties of a plantation mistress. The reading, writing and mathematical courses were the most important for use in household management. All other courses were purely ornamental or of little practical use on plantations, unless the graduates of Judson passed that education on to their children. Judson did, however, open the minds of its students while instilling Christian beliefs.

Cocke's education did not end with her graduation from Judson Female Institute in 1856. Like young ladies of similar wealth and social standing, she followed her education by traveling to Europe. While in Europe, she focused on studying music and languages, while enjoying the pleasures of the Old World. She studied under the great

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[73] Hamilton and Wells, *Daughters of the Dream*, 6-7.

masters of music and possibly took in lectures at Oxford University. According to family legend, Zitella Cocke was presented to Queen Victoria during one of her trips to Europe; probably during the time she was studying music there.[74] The Cocke family possessed the wealth and means to travel abroad, and trips to Europe may have served the dual purpose of providing educational and cultural opportunities for the children and improving the health of the often-ill Mary Binion Cocke. Zitella Cocke took advantage of her time spent in Europe, acquiring knowledge that she later used to support herself and her family.

Despite the hardships of life on the plantation during the antebellum years, Zitella Cocke and her family enjoyed the pleasures and advantages of wealth. However, things would quickly change, and the next period of her life was filled with pain, loss and sadness. She had already taken on the responsibility of caring for an invalid mother, but the Civil War forced her into a role for which many young ladies of her status were not prepared. Zitella Cocke was forced to set aside her desires and pride and help support her family financially. Life during the Civil War and Reconstruction would test her and her family.

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[74] 1987 Alabama Women's Hall of Fame Nomination Application, Judson College, Marion, Alabama. There is no indication of how often Zitella Cocke traveled to Europe, but documentation indicates that she spent time in Europe at three times during her life. She journeyed to Europe during her residence in Boston and her trips during those years are discussed in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 2

LIFE IN THE CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION SOUTH

On January 11, 1861, Alabama joined three other Southern states in the new Confederate States of America.[75] In February 1861, the new nation of the Confederate States of America had selected Montgomery as its capitol and Jefferson Davis as its president. Excitement and jubilant celebrations arose from throughout the South as the populace began to prepare for war with the Union. Despite the fever-pitched excitement throughout the South, many wished for a peaceful break from the union. By April 1861, emotions were running high throughout the South and the Civil War commenced with the first shots of the Battle of Fort Sumter. The Civil War changed the nation and "blurred passions shaped the life and death decisions that tore families as well as the nation apart."[76] The war separated families throughout the nation. Women, children and elderly men were left on the home front to care for their homes, support the family, and in the South, face the war in their own front lawns. It also created splits between family members who decided to join different sides of the war. Early victories experienced by the South created excitement throughout the region, but the tide quickly turned, and the South faced massive shortages, sacrifices and destruction.

[75] Rogers, et al., *Alabama: The History of a Deep South State*, 184.

[76] Clinton, *Tara Revisited: Women, War, and the Plantation Legend*, 53.

There was little doubt that Alabama and the South in general were poorly equipped for fighting a war, in fact, the state was not fully linked by a mature or decent infrastructure for transportation. The roads and railroads built preceding the war in the Southern states were the primary means for transporting cotton to ports and markets. An overemphasis on agriculture also harmed the South by diverting attention from the manufacturing goods the state could have produced from its own deposits of iron, coal, and other natural resources. Since King Cotton created a dependence upon imported goods produced by the North or foreign industries, the South easily fell victim to Northern blockades of its ports and rivers that acted as highways into the state. Like many other governors throughout the South, Alabama's Governor Andrew Berry Moore of Marion, tried to prepare the state for war but knew that his state would not be able to fully equip itself.[77]

Alabama served as the first seat for the Confederate government and Montgomery reverberated with the excitement in Jefferson Davis' inauguration. The crowds gathered at the Capitol and on the streets early on February 18, 1861, to watch the procession and inaugural events. People crowded around the portico, and a few people were able to find places in the front balconies and windows to witness the inauguration of the Confederate States of America's government. During the inauguration, Jefferson Davis and his Vice President, Alexander Stephens, received flowers and a wreath gathered by ladies of Montgomery. Inaugural balls and parties celebrating Southern freedom followed the

[77] Ibid., 186.

ceremonies.[78]

People flocked to Montgomery seeking positions in the new government and the city quickly became crowded. In May 1861, it was decided that Richmond, Virginia, would be a better and healthier location for the Confederate Capitol.[79] Alabama continued to play an important part in the newly formed government with many of its citizens either taking leadership roles in Richmond or serving in the military. Alabama also helped supply the Confederate troops; Selma became a manufacturing center and seven iron furnaces were located throughout central Alabama providing the Confederate government with iron.[80] The state also took pride in producing the world's first submarine. Three vessels were built in Mobile, two sank during trial runs, but a third, the *Hunley*, would be the first submarine to successfully attack a warship in combat. None of the support the state gave to the war could have been possible without the hard work and sacrifices of Alabama's families.

The early mustering of Confederate troops took on a very festive air, with townspeople coming out to send their "gallant boys off to war." Citizens made flags and presented them to the soldiers before they left. Marion sent three companies to the war,

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[78] Waugh, et al., *The Women's War in the South: Recollections and Reflections of the American Civil War* (Nashville: Cumberland House, 1999), 27-28.

[79] Rogers, et al., *Alabama: The History of a Deep South State,* 192. Montgomery was a relatively crude and dirty town. It lacked a sufficient system of sanitation and the town repeatedly suffered from bouts of diseases such as malaria and cholera.

[80] Bibb, Jefferson and Cherokee counties were all home to blast furnaces before the Civil War. Brierfield Iron Works in Bibb County, the Irondale furnaces in Jefferson County and the Cornwall furnace in Cherokee County were among the different iron works operating in Alabama.

the Marion Rifles and companies in the 4th Alabama and 28th Alabama Regiments. The town presented three flags to each unit, and Zitella Cocke participated in the flag presentation to the Marion Rifles. There are many differing accounts of the flag presentation; many of which appeared over fifty years after the event. Much of the confusion arises because there were three companies and three different flag; old age also played tricks upon the memories those involved. Vignettes of the details provide insight into the feelings and exuberance of the people for the cause of freedom from the Union. The best account lies not in the memories of the participants, but in the pages of the December 15, 1860, edition of the *Marion Tri-Weekly Commonwealth.*

Before Alabama's secession from the United States, Governor Albert Moore activated volunteer companies that had been created in 1860. Governor Moore ordered the companies to seize federal installations in Alabama, such as Forts Morgan and Gaines in Mobile and the U.S. Arsenal in Mount Vernon in December 1860. Moore justified the move by stating it was necessary to maintain peace during the secession and went so far as to inform President James Buchanan of the action to avoid hostilities in the state.[81] Among the companies activated by Governor Moore was the Marion Rifles. The unit left Marion in December 1860 for Fort Morgan where they participated in the seizure of the fort. After the federal installations were seized, the Marion Rifles returned to Marion where the men disbanded; many were later reformed into companies in the 4th and 20th Alabama Regiments. The Marion Rifles never fought for the Confederate States of America as an individual unit, their role in Alabama's history was in setting the stage for secession. Many of the unit's men went on to fight in the Civil War and the flag presented to the unit saw several engagements. The Marion Rifles flag presentation in

[81] Rogers, et al., *Alabama: The History of a Deep South State,* 187.

December 1860, distinguished Cocke and displayed her intelligence and speaking ability. Her involvement in the presentation has been woven into the fabric of Marion's history and has been honored by the United Daughters of the Confederacy with a bronze plaque attached to the corner of Judson College's Jewett Hall.

On December 13, 1860, masses of people gathered on the campus of the Judson Female Institute to witness a spectacular event, the presentation of the company flag to the men of the Marion Rifles. The town had invited several other volunteer companies from neighboring communities, but only two were present, the Governor's Guards of Selma and the Summerfield Hussars. A large crowd gathered on the front lawn of Judson Female Institute that evening to watch the ceremony and participate in the celebration that followed. The Marion Rifles hosted a ball for the young ladies who had presented them with the flag. The young ladies of Marion who had arranged and participated in the production of the flag and its presentation were standing on a platform erected especially for the purpose. Zitella Cocke was selected to present the flag and say a few words to the men who were marching off to Fort Morgan to guard the state. The full text of Cocke's speech published in the *Marion Tri*-Weekly can be found in Appendix A. As soon as everyone had taken their positions, Miss Cocke was introduced by L.N. Walthall and she proceeded with her speech, which contained several poetic verses. This speech was followed by a reply from the Marion Rifles delivered by M.M. Cooke. The speeches extolled the virtues of the patriotism, liberty and peace. Cocke conveyed the pride and love the town had for the gallant men, and M.M. Cooke thanked the ladies of Marion for their sacrifices and promised them glory for their devotion to the cause.[82] The speeches

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[82] *Marion Tri-Weekly Commonwealth*, December 15, 1860.

were followed by celebrations and the event was a joyous one. Like most of the South, however the town would learn the true nature and destruction the noble cause would bring to the country.

Excitement lingered in Marion after the Marion Rifles departed for Fort Morgan in December of 1860. As other troops began to leave for service in the Confederate army in 1861, the festivities continued in Marion. One event that preceded a troop's departure consisted of a concert followed by a "tableaux vivants" presented by the young ladies of Marion.[83] A group of girls dressed symbolically to represent each of the Confederate States and each girl carried the national flag of the Confederate States of America. The event stirred the emotions of all citizens that attended and added fuel to the patriotic spirit that encouraged men to enlist. Judson's president, Noah K. Davis, recalled that the "next day there was a sweeping march for the field, from which, alas! many never returned."[84]

Despite the euphoria that accompanied the mustering of troops and their departure from the field, hard times were coming. The next few months brought shortages of food, fuel, cloth, paper and labor. Problems with inflated prices, devalued currency, communications and transportation only accentuated the South's lack of preparedness. The South did not have the military force numbers of its opponent, had and the North's manpower advantage was evident from the beginning. The lack of preparedness and disproportionate military strength demonstrated how difficult life in the South would be during the war. Most women in the South who were "left at home without their men, assumed responsibility for maintaining and if possible increasing the food supply, for

[83] Tableaux vivants is a French phrase meaning roughly "living picture."

[84] Hamilton and Wells, *Daughters of the Dream*, 60.

producing cotton and wool and making clothing, flags, tents, bandages, and other things soldiers needed."[85] Women often took on the burdens of labor that they had not been previously given credit for in order to insure the survival of their families.

Many towns on the Southern home front felt the effects of infantry and the destruction caused by cavalry troops. Much of Alabama was lucky to escape the worst of the military engagements of the war. Marion and its schools were fortunate considering the war marched within miles of the town. In March and April of 1865, the nearby towns of Selma and Tuscaloosa suffered destruction at the mercy of cannons and torches. Though Marion did not suffer any physical scars, it did not escape the war unscathed. Judson was particularly vulnerable because many of its students, faculty and staff spent the war years away from their loved ones. They suffered from fear, insecurity, grief and shortages that plagued the entire South.[86]

Judson survived the war without destruction and announced that the students were as safe at school as at home, although shortages plagued the school as well as the town and region. Judson and Marion adjusted to the food, clothing and labor shortages that plagued Alabama and the South. During the war, Judson students used second-hand books until the covers wore off, and the dress code was relaxed since clothing was difficult to procure. Judson's students wore old clothing and homespun cloth with pride. The scarcity of shoe leather also presented a problem faced by the students. Judson resorted to purchasing shoes made by a local black shoemaker who brought bags of coarse shoes that were distributed to students. The shoes were intended for use on

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[85] Scott, *The Southern Lady*, 81.

[86] Hamilton and Wells, *Daughters of the Dream*, 61.

plantations, but each student that received a pair, proudly and gratefully wore them.[87] Young ladies who were accustomed to the finest cloth and leather, now gladly accepted the coarser replacements.

Just as Judson students were forced to adjust to the shortages and changes brought on by war, so too were the townspeople of Marion, including the Cocke Family. Zitella Cocke had finished school in 1856 at the age of 16 and was 20 years old when the Civil War began. She had spent the years prior to the war traveling abroad in Europe and caring for her family. The Civil War changed her life, from coping with the death of her brother at the Battle of Gettysburg, to the need for her to financially support the family. Her father, who did not serve in the military, fell ill and her invalid mother was not capable of supporting the family. Cocke had always helped her mother with the household care of the children. During the war, she became responsible for the care of her siblings, as well as working to support the family. The Civil War was a pivotal time in Cocke's life, providing her first real experience with grief and opening the doors for an independent life.

Zitella Cocke had two brothers who fought in the war, each in different regiments. James Madison Cocke joined the Marion Light Infantry (Co. G) company of the 4th Alabama Regiment at the age of 19 on April 24, 1861, as a private. He fought in the engagements of first Manassas and Gettysburg.[88] Unfortunately, his service with the

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[87] Ibid., 61-62.

[88] Civil War Service Database, Alabama Department of Archives and History, http://www.archives.state.al.us/civilwar/soldier.cfm. The Alabama Archives has undertaken the task of compiling the Confederate service cards into a database that is easier to search and access. The cards were

Confederate Army ended when he died from wounds received at the Battle of Gettysburg on July 2, 1863. James was a student with great potential before he enlisted in the service, and Zitella Cocke felt his loss greatly. Cocke's other brother, John Binion Cocke, at the age of 18 joined the 20th Alabama Regiment in 1863 as a private.[89] He had been a student at Howard College and the University of Alabama before his enlistment. During his service John moved through the ranks becoming a lieutenant and later a captain. He participated in the battles of Jackson, Lookout Mountain, Missionary Ridge and Nashville and left the service as a member of General Edmund W. Pettus' staff.[90] The Cocke family sent two sons to war to fight for the Confederate States of America and they were fortunate to have one return safely home. Because Cocke was greatly saddened by the death of James at Gettysburg, she clung to her remaining brothers, even helping to raise John's children after his death in 1893.

The Civil War affected Zitella Cocke's life in ways other than the military service of her brothers and the death of James. According to the school catalogs for Judson Female Institute, Zitella Cocke served in the music department during the 1861-1862 academic school year. Throughout the war she served in a teaching position to help support her family financially. No doubt she was talented in music and her time spent studying music at Judson and in Europe made her an excellent teacher. Cocke's father, Woodson, fell ill during the war and was unable to support his family, leaving the

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compiled from information on muster rolls, pension request and regimental histories during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Marie Bankhead Owen, "Zitella Cocke, Poet" Alabama Historical Quarterly (Volume 1, Winter 1930: 422-23); Eborn, An Appreciation of the Life and Writings of Zitella Cocke, 9.

responsibility to the women. Cocke's mother was a delicate woman, who had always been sick and weak, and was therefore unable to provide for the family. This left Cocke to care for her parents and siblings and provide financial the support. She took job teaching, which as was discussed in the previous chapter, the South often looked down on women of the elite class being employed. The times were hard and the antebellum mores were put aside for the betterment of the Confederate government. Cocke was fortunate to find a position that allowed her to use the ornamental arts taught to her at Judson before the war. Her employment at Judson allowed her to provide the family with additional funds to purchase goods, especially when the income from agricultural products fell.

As the war progressed, the tide turned on the Confederate troops, and by late 1863, Vicksburg had fallen to the Union Army and the Confederates were forced to abandon Mississippi. The war began to visit Marion and other parts of Alabama as Union troops invaded the Deep South. As the Confederate Army moved east and south, it began seeking locations for hospitals and Marion lay in the path. Rumors spread that Judson might be solicited as a hospital and President Noah Davis sought help from Major Preston B. Scott, Medical Director for the Department of Alabama, Mississippi and East Louisiana. With over 200 hundred students residing at Judson, it was apparent to Noah Davis that the school was an inappropriate location for a hospital. Since Howard College possessed several excellent buildings and few students in attendance, it was decided that it was a much better choice for a hospital.[91] Howard served the Confederate government as a hospital from 1863-1865 and the people of Marion contributed their time in aiding

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[91] Ibid., 64-65.

the wounded and the hospital staff.[92] Today, Marion is the final resting place of nearly one hundred young men who gave their lives fighting for both the Confederate States and the United States.

Union General James H. Wilson and Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest both directed military maneuvers in the Black Belt region surrounding Marion. General Wilson and his cavalry marched from northwest Alabama to capture and destroy the ordnance complex in Selma. Along the road to Selma lay Marion, its two female schools, military hospital and 1,400 plus citizens. General Forrest attempted to delay Wilson's Raiders but was unable to prevent the fall of Selma. After Selma, General Wilson turned east to Montgomery while General Forrest retreated north through Marion in April of 1865. With the April 9, 1865, surrender of General Robert E. Lee at Appomattox, the danger to Marion ended and Reconstruction began.

Desolation best describes the South after the war. Bridges had been burned and railroads broken up, making communication and transportation difficult and even dangerous in some places. The people, though relieved that the war was over, were also demoralized by their defeat and the destruction of their property.[93] Luckily, Marion had avoided the blatant destruction and devastation wrought by war, but the citizens suffered from a collapsed financial system and the inflation caused by the war. Though Cocke and her family did not directly suffer at the hands of the Union Army, the war had changed their lives. The family lost a son at the Battle of Gettysburg, the emancipation

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[92] There is no indication that Cocke volunteered in the hospital. It is more likely that she spent most of her time working at Judson and caring for her sick parents. Her family doctor probably recommended that she avoid contact with patients in the hospital in order to insure the health of her parents.

[93] Louise Manly, *History of Judson College, 1838-1913* (Atlanta: Foote & Davis Co., 1913), 58.

of slaves left the family without the free labor to work the fields, the prices of cotton fell to unprecedented lows, and the inflated economic system of the Confederate government drained the family of the wealth they had previously held. Like so many other Southern families, the Cocke's were forced to rebuild their lives and wealth, though they never achieved pre-war levels. Thus, the very essence of the Cocke family's life had been forever changed by the war. Southern women, who played an essential role in keeping the home intact during the war, were now expected to take the burden from the men returning from the military field. Soldiers coming home had suffered greatly, many bearing the physical scars as well as the emotional and psychological traumas of war. Aggravating the situation of white Southerners was the celebratory manner in which their former slaves embraced freedom. The presence of federal troops during the Reconstruction constantly reminded white Southerners of their failed rebellion.[94] Despite the evidence that the Antebellum South and its society had ended, white Southerners attempted to build a new South that resembled the old.

Reconstruction in Alabama was a tumultuous mix of industrial growth, entrepreneurship, and rebuilding. For those Alabamians who invested their entire emotional and financial life in the Confederate States of America, the defeat was especially bitter. They could choose between living with less material wealth and with former slaves walking freely in the streets, or they could leave the state and settle in the western frontier or in the colonies in Brazil and Mexico. Most Alabamians remained in the state and began the rebuilding process that included construction of the basic infrastructure of railroads, depots and telegraph lines. Blast furnaces, foundries and

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[94] Clinton, *Tara Revisited,* 163-164.

many buildings needed to be repaired in order for industry in the state to grow.[95] During the Reconstruction, industry in Alabama blossomed and cities like Birmingham exploded on the scene. Alabama became home to a substantial iron industry which brought wealth and prosperity to the state. The war and the reconstruction had forever changed the state and created distrust and animosity in most of the state's white population.

The political changes also hindered the reconstruction of the state. The U.S. Congress enacted a radical reconstruction, harsh restrictions sufficiently punished the South for its treason and benefited the freed slaves. The federal government insured that freedmen would obtain political offices and all the benefits of freedom. Power was taken from the hands of the plantation elite and given to the freedmen, carpetbaggers and scalawags that were so despised by most white Southerners. The freed slaves saw the Reconstruction as the beginning of the autonomy and equality for which they had hungered for many years. However, white Southerners were faced with defeat and tried to grasp the reality of life without slave labor.[96] As the reconstruction of the South progressed, white Southerners began to establish the idea of the "Lost Cause" as a means to revive some semblance of the old social life of the region.[97] Despite the efforts of white Southerners to reconstruct their old lives, the South had forever changed and the problems in the region would grow steadily worse with falling cotton prices, failing crops, increased distrust of government and hatred and aggression against freed blacks.

The years following the Civil War brought changes to Marion, Alabama. The

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[95] Rogers, et al., *Alabama: A History of a Deep South State*, 228-229.

[96] Foner, Eric, *America's Reconstruction: People and Politics After the Civil War*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 50.

[97] Ibid., 56-57.

federal government increased the African-American voter registration and aided in their election to state governmental offices. Former slaves not only could vote and serve in political offices, they were also being offered educational opportunities. In 1867, Lincoln Normal School (now known as Alabama State University) opened to freed slaves in Marion.[98] As white soldiers attempted to rebuild their lives, their former slaves were enjoying the benefits of freedom, and carpetbaggers were grabbing up wealth through speculation. Zitella Cocke related in a letter that "Crackers" were now living a high life in Marion, indulging themselves in riches while others were struggling.[99]

The Cocke family was just one of the families that had to struggle through irreversible changes in their lives caused by the war and Reconstruction. Two years after the end of the war, Woodson Cocke succumbed to the illness that he suffered during the Civil War. Like many wealthy Southern families, the Cockes suffered financially and after Woodson's death were forced to sell much of the land that he had acquired. Cocke's brothers began making lives for themselves after the war, but they stuck to farming as their primary occupation. Before his death in 1893, John B. Cocke served as Marion's postmaster and sheriff. As her brothers established themselves in occupations and resumed the lives they had left for military service, Zitella Cocke continued teaching music at Judson College. She, being the oldest child, took the responsibility for

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[98] Hamilton and Wells, *Daughters of the Dream*, 69-70.

[99] Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Louise Manly, Marion, Ala., June 16, circa 1910s, Zitella Cocke Manuscripts, Judson College Archives. Cocke often wrote Louise Manly providing advice concerning Ms. Manly's book on Judson College and preparing for the anniversary celebration at Judson. When Cocke referred to "Crackers," she used a derogatory slur to describe poor whites and other disreputable whites in the South.

supporting the family during the tumultuous years of the Reconstruction. Zitella Cocke continued to work as a means to support her family and helped her younger sisters finish their educations.

Zitella Cocke's teaching career began during the war and continued through the Reconstruction era. She was a member of the school's Music Department, and in 1868 was appointed as Principal of the department.[100] An account of Zitella Cocke's teaching career can be found in the letters of Elizabeth DeVotie, a Judson student and daughter of Reverend James H. DeVotie. Reverend DeVotie had served as the minister at Siloam Baptist Church from 1841-1856 and lived in the home later occupied by Cocke's family.[101] Elizabeth DeVotie attended Judson during the late 1860s and her letters from the 1867-1868 academic year provide insight into student life and Zitella Cocke as a teacher.

DeVotie recorded how she had lost her patience during a music lesson. Zitella Cocke, whom she called Miss Stella, told her "you must not get out of patience, Miss Lizzie."[102] She commented that other students complained that Cocke was cross, but she felt Ms. Cocke spoke to her kindly and did not think she was at all cross. She further

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[100] Judson Female Institute catalogs dated 1861, 1866-1870. The catalogs are in possession of the registrar at Judson College. Hamilton and Wells, *Daughters of the Dream*, 76.

[101] Harris, *Perry County Heritage, Volume II*, 51.

[102] Elizabeth Annie DeVotie, Marion, Ala., to James H. DeVotie and his wife, Columbus, Ga., February 1, 1868. James H. DeVotie Papers, 1839-1873, Rare Book, Manuscript, & Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. The DeVotie correspondence from Elizabeth DeVotie to her parents provides an excellent view of student life and the faculty at the school. Most of the letters date from the 1867-1868 academic year.

described Cocke as "an old maid of the much approved style."[103] According to DeVotie, Cocke could ask more questions than "any old yankey [sic]."[104] She also describes Zitella Cocke as being able to sing sweetly but DeVotie was often tickled by the "awful faces" Cocke would make while singing. Cocke participated in music recitals as was expected of music teachers and in an April 4, 1868, letter, Elizabeth DeVotie tells her parents about a concert. Cocke played a march during which the girls marched on the stage in couples. DeVotie played two overtures and several other girls performed as well.[105] Elizabeth DeVotie's descriptions provide insight into the personality of Zitella Cocke. She demonstrated the kindness and propriety expected of a single, Southern lady. DeVotie also provided the only description of Cocke's voice. Cocke rarely opened her personal life to others, so DeVotie's descriptions of her allow one to see the real Zitella Cocke.

Besides teaching in the Music Department at Judson Female Institute, Zitella Cocke was among the seventeen Judson graduates who participated in creating the Society of Alumnae in 1868. The alumnae undertook the creation of the society in order to maintain ties to the college and their classmates.[106] These devoted alumnae worked to

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[103] Elizabeth Annie DeVotie, Marion, Ala., to James H. DeVotie and his wife, Columbus, Ga., February 8, 1868. James H. DeVotie Papers, 1839-1873, Rare Book, Manuscript, & Special Collections Library, Duke Univ., Durham, N.C.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Elizabeth Annie DeVotie, Marion, Ala., to James H. DeVotie and his wife, Columbus, Ga., April 4, 1868. James H. DeVotie Papers, 1839-1873, Rare Book, Manuscript, & Special Collections Library, Duke Univ., Durham, N.C.

[106] Hamilton and Wells, *Daughters of the Dream,* 78-79.

raise money for the construction of a new music hall for the school. They used events such as ice cream socials, strawberry festivals, suppers, operettas, bazaars and parties to raise funds.[107] Cocke actively participated in the events organized by the Alumnae Society especially because they would benefit the music department at Judson. She was asked to direct an operetta during the commencement season; Saroni's "Lily Bell, or The Culprit Fay" was chosen, and was well advertised throughout Alabama. The music hall, now known as the Alumnae Auditorium, was completed in 1904, after years of fundraising and setbacks.

Zitella Cocke was busy during the years following the Civil War teaching, working with the alumnae society, nursing her mother and supervising the education of her sisters. Her mother had always been of delicate health and the death of her husband only exasperated the problem. During the post-war years, Cocke supported her family, nursed her sick mother and raised her younger sisters.[108] Mary Binion Cocke finally passed away in the 1870s, leaving Cocke responsible for the care and education of her youngest sister, Effie.[109] It was during this time that Zitella Cocke sold her first poem to a publisher. She received twenty dollars for the poem, but still gave music lessons since

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[107] Ibid., 79-80.

[108] Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Thomas M. Owen, Montgomery, Ala., February 3, circa 1900s, Zitella Cocke Papers, LPR 161, ADAH. Like many of her letters to Thomas and Marie Owen, this letter contains biographical information that was later used in the Owen's book on the history of Alabama and biography of Alabama personalities.

[109] I was unable to find an exact date for Mary B. Cocke's death, evidence suggests that she died during the 1870s. Zitella was very devoted to the care of her family would not have moved away until everyone was settled and cared for.

her sister was dependant on her financial support.[110] Once her younger sisters were educated and married, Cocke felt free to move from Marion. In 1879-1880, she moved to Chicago, where her younger sisters lived. Both of her sisters, Molly Cocke Hunt and Effie Cocke Farson, possessed the musical talent that Zitella had used to support the family for years. Cocke described Molly as a delightful singer, and Effie was a soprano for Christ Church and according to Cocke one of the best singers in Chicago.[111] While living in Chicago, Zitella Cocke was a member of the music department, as well as the Young Ladies department, at Lake Forest University during the 1880-1881 academic year.[112] The time following her tenure at Lake Forest University and her residence in Boston is rather vague. She mentions that she also had charge of a music department at a college in Virginia.[113] She lived in Baltimore; flyers for music recitals in her papers at the Alabama Department of Archives and History show that she gave private music lessons there and directed student recitals. Unfortunately, there are no dates on the flyers, but they do demonstrate that she was able to use her musical talents. Some sources place her in Baltimore following the trip she took abroad after her graduation from Judson, and

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[110] Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Thomas M. Owen, Montgomery, Ala., February 8, circa 1910s, Zitella Cocke Papers, LPR 161, ADAH.

[111] Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Thomas M. Owen, Montgomery, Ala., February 3, circa 1900s, Zitella Cocke Papers, LPR 161, ADAH.

[112] Lake Forest University catalog, 1880-1881, Special Collections, Donnelly Library, Lake Forest College.

[113] Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Marie B. Owen, Montgomery, Ala., September 28, circa 1910s, Zitella Cocke Papers, LPR 161, ADAH. There is no mention of what college but an article written in Judson College's *Triangle* following her death states that she taught in Collins, Virginia. Research did not turn up any records for a college in a Collins, Va., but records may no longer exist.

there seems to be some evidence that she lived there just prior to her residence in Boston, Massachusetts.[114] Cocke left Lake Forest University for Baltimore, Maryland, where she began writing and teaching music and German in private lessons.[115] Despite the vagueness between her time at Judson and Lake Forest, it is known that Cocke taught music in different colleges for two decades of her life and continued to give music lessons while living in Boston. She had learned to support herself financially and did so until her death in 1929.

Cocke spent many years caring for her family; it is evident that her education in music which she had received from her mother, Judson and travels abroad enabled her to give private lessons and take positions in music departments at colleges. She was able to provide financial support to her family during the illness suffered by her father and after the death of both her parents during the Reconstruction. The losses incurred by the Civil War and the period of Reconstruction changed life in the South. Cocke's life before the war was filled with the promises of wealth and, possibly, marriage, allowing her a life of leisure. In the absence of healthy parents and her brothers, she served as the caregiver and financial supporter of the family, a role that few young ladies took. Whether her martial status was determined by herself or possibly by some tragic event caused by war cannot be determined. It is apparent that the hardships of war forced her into a role that required her to sacrifice her desires for the betterment of her family and she may have chosen to remain devoted to her family rather than marry.

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[114] There are no dates for Zitella's residence in Baltimore, Maryland. Sources vary on when she may have resided there and Zitella never mentions in her letters her residence there.

[115] Eborn, An Appreciation of the Life and Writings of Zitella Cocke, 10.

Most Southerners incurred financial losses and Cocke's family was no different, though they managed to maintain a portion of the acreage the family once held. Her father was still a large landowner and her brothers both owned large plats of land following the war, but the inflation in prices and the failure of Alabama's economy left many families much poorer than they realized. Debt escalated during the Reconstruction years and it was common for Southern women to take positions to help their families financially. Zitella Cocke taught music for many years and by doing so was able to care for her younger sisters, insuring their education following the death of their parents. Once the futures of her siblings were established, Cocke was able to pursue her interest in writing.

CHAPTER 3

LIFE IN BOSTON AND THE RETURN HOME

Once Zitella Cocke's youngest sister finished school and married, Cocke was free to pursue her own life. She maintained a connection to two of her sisters, who married and moved to Chicago, by taking a position from 1880-1881 at Lake Forest University in Evanston, Illinois. At the completion of the year, Cocke moved east to Baltimore, Maryland where she taught music lessons. She also held a stint teaching music at a college in Virginia before her move to Boston, Massachusetts.[116] Cocke moved to Boston in the 1890s to further her career as a writer. Considered the center for literary activity in the nation, Boston caused an invigoration of literature.[117] New England proved fertile ground for the publishing and writing of literature and Boston embraced its role as the literary center of the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. All of the great publishing houses were located in the city, which offered Cocke the opportunity to advance her literary career. The numerous magazines and newspapers in the city provided Cocke with additional publication venues and means of support. Cocke had always been fond of the city and may have desired to escape the changes of the South following the Civil War and Reconstruction. Despite becoming

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[116] Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Marie B. Owen, Montgomery, Ala., September 28, circa 1910s, Zitella Cocke Papers, LPR 161, ADAH.

[117] Lucius Beebe, *Boston and the Boston Legend* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1935), 97.

blind in 1916, Cocke continued to write up until her death in 1929.[118] Besides writing poems, essays, short stories and music, she also taught Harvard students music, especially Beethoven and Chopin.[119] Zitella Cocke admired and loved the city, but she never lost her loyalty to the South during the decades she lived in Boston.

Zitella Cocke's first achievements in the literary world were translations for the Boston Public Library. She possessed an excellent knowledge of French, German, Italian and Latin, and many of the works that she translated for the library were French and German.[120] Cocke then turned to writing essays and short stories that covered an expanse of subjects from history to etiquette. In addition to writing, she also composed music and even became a member of the Alabama Federation of Music Clubs.[121] For years, she had been writing poems but had done so mostly for her own enjoyment. In her thirty-year residence in Boston, Cocke produced over 290 poems and published three volumes. The works written during her residence in Boston won her admiration from people throughout the world.

Zitella Cocke traveled extensively during her years in Boston, often meeting people who admired her work. During one trip to Europe, she visited Temple Bar in London, where she stopped to admire a portrait of Cocke of Littlejohn, one of her ancestors. While standing before the portrait, she was approached by an English officer

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[118] The cause of Zitella's blindness is unknown, but it is apparent that the blindness gradually worsened through her life. She states in several letters to Thomas and Marie Owen that her eyesight was worsening. She also suffered from lumbago, and the harsh winter climate adversely affected her health.

[119] Eborn, An Appreciation of the Life and Writings of Zitella Cocke, 10-12.

[120] Ibid., 13.

[121] Ibid., 13-14.

and a conversation commenced between the two. It turned out the officer and Zitella Cocke were both related to Cocke of Litteljohn. The officer drew a copy of her poem "October Days" from his pocket and wondered if she knew the author.[122] Another incident occurred in Scotland. She had traveled to Edinburgh and on her way to a boarding house on George Street, she stopped to rest in a Bible store. The storekeeper offered her a seat and talked with her while she rested. Cocke was asked to register her name before she left, when the storekeeper saw Cocke's name and he led her to the window where her poem "My Cross" was used to raise money for missions. While in Britain, whether the same trip described above or another, Zitella Cocke attended a church in Oxford and heard the minister read the poem "My Cross" during the service.[123] Cocke's work in Boston afforded her more opportunities to travel in Europe. Before the Civil War, she traveled abroad to receive musical instruction in Europe, as well as with her family to locations that would aid her mother's recovery. However, during the Civil War and the Reconstruction hardships abounded and travel was sacrificed for survival. Life was different in Boston, the hardships that she and her comrades faced in the South were not endured by Bostonians.

Boston was a different world from that of the South. Founded in 1630, Boston was an undertaking financed by a sum upwards of five million dollars given by members of the founding families. The population in the early years was primarily merchant adventurers from the upper classes of Great Britain.[124] The city possessed a unique and

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[122] Ibid., 18.

[123] Ibid., 19-20; Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Marie B. Owen , Montgomery, Ala., September 15, circa 1910s, Zitella Cocke Papers, LPR 161, ADAH.

[124] Cleveland Amory, *The Proper Bostonians* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1947), 36.

colorful history. Boston is famous for its role in the Revolutionary War and the fight for colonial freedom. Such events as the Boston Massacre, the Boston Tea Party and Paul Revere's ride are taught in history classes throughout the nation today. Though Bostonians were not known for their manners, they did boast customs that dated back to their British origins.[125] Everything British was embraced in Boston and the formality of Victorian conventions stubbornly survived the relaxation of etiquette rules following World War I.[126]

The Boston known to outsiders was not the same as that of the "Proper Bostonian."[127] Patronage was extremely restrictive and stringent observance of customs overwhelmed many outsiders. The newspaper, the *Boston Transcript*, became an integral part of the Boston scene during its century of existence.[128] For example, during the winter months Boston's proper woman attended the "Symphony" every Friday. The ritual of assuming seats each Friday at the Symphony became an integral ritual in the lives of many Bostonians. To be a true Symphony patron meant that one must be a "Friend" of the orchestra. Once a year the Symphony's program announced not only a complete list of "Friends" but also a published Honor Roll of all those who attended the orchestra under each of it regular conductors. Interestedly there were over one hundred women listed and only fifteen men on the Honor Roll.[129]

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[125] Ibid., 246-248.

[126] Ibid.

[127] The "Proper Bostonian" was a person whose family was among the founders of the city, married well and upheld the customs of the Boston society.

[128] Beebe, *Boston and the Boston Legend*, 185.

[129] Ibid., 234-235; Amory, *The Proper Bostonians*, 113-117.

Besides attending the Symphony each Friday, the women of Boston religiously observed the restrictive Victorian conventions of the late nineteenth century. Most women entertained during tea, which was the genteel standard of living but also the least disruptive since they would have tea regardless of company. They also established formal calling hours between 4:00 and 6:00 in the afternoon and regular reception or "at home," days to receive callers. Callers were required to arrive promptly for appointments and did not linger longer than necessary. [130] Another curious feature of life in Boston was the love of funerals, members of the First Families of Boston eagerly planned their funerals.[131] Boston was unlike any other city in the United States and the members of the elite proudly embraced the customs and conventions that made their society so exclusive.

Besides the customs and conventions of Bostonians' lives, there was also a passion for embracing social and political issues. Women in Boston participated in the abolitionist and women's suffrage movements in America. Many of Boston's women possessed a stubborn mind that was regarded by many as a peculiar product of the city.[132] Outside the severe exterior embodied by their antiquated hats, the women of Boston had incredible vitality that they used in their support of issues.

Boston was very different from the world from which Zitella Cocke had spent much of her life. The experiences and customs of the area differed greatly and Cocke remained an outsider in the city. She never apologized for her Southern heritage or hid the fact from her Bostonian associates. Women in the North had embraced the

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[130] Bebee, *Boston and the Boston Legend*, 248.

[131] Ibid., 253.

[132] M.A. DeWolfe Howe, *Boston: The Place and the People*, (New York: Macmillan Co., 1903), 265.

abolitionist movement and responded with much warmer hearts to the plight of the slave women.[133] Prior to the outbreak of war, a wedge had been driven between the North and South. The Puritan Boston was the epitome of all that the South despised and rejected. With men like William Lloyd Garrison demanding the total and immediate emancipation of slaves, the South was disturbed by the growth of the abolitionist movement. Most Southerners were repelled by the growth of industrialism in the North. Ugly clusters of mill and factory towns built by the Yankees sprang out of beautiful green acres of land, a commodity so dear to Southern hearts. Many in the South felt that the "daily parades of faceless, wage-workers to and from their wooden boarding houses to the red brick textile factories" made slavery look benevolent.[134] Southerners wanted to maintain the natural beauty they praised in their rolling fields and the simple agrarian traditions espoused by President Thomas Jefferson.[135]

The wave of liberal social reform in the North baffled most Southerners who felt the notions of refraining from alcohol, coddling convicts, surrendering weapons, allowing women to work outside the home, and setting slaves loose on the community were perversions of the natural order of the world.[136] The social mores of the South required total dominance of white males, giving the power to the elite class of planters. In general, "Southerners saw their differences with New England Puritanism as rooted not only in slavery, but also in differences of 'manner, habits, and social life, and different

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[133] Ibid., 265.

[134] Thomas H. O'Connor, *Civil War Boston: Home Front and Battlefield,* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1997), 6.

[135] Ibid.

[136] Ibid.

notions about politics, morals, and religion.'"[137]

William Lloyd Garrison was one of Boston's vocal abolitionists and his movement in the 1830s frightened Southerners and many of the city's owners of mills and textile factories. Garrison declared that slavery was a moral evil that had to be eradicated from the American landscape. Many of Boston's industrialists insisted that they had nothing in common with Garrison and his radical ideals. These men refused to see their Southern brethrens as evil or immoral and were not ready in the 1830s to eliminate slavery where it had already existed.[138] Reasoning for this Southern support can be found in the nature of industry in the area. New England was the home to many mill towns and textile factories, and the industrialists of Boston profited from the production of cloth. The South and its system of slavery provided the mills and factories with excellent quality cotton and enhanced the profits of men in the North and the South. Industrialists recognized that the eradication of slavery would damage the economy of a region so reliant on the South's commodity. One could not say that Bostonians were free of prejudice because Alexis de Tocqueville observed during his visit to America during the eighteenth century that the racial prejudice appeared greater in the North than the South.[139] Despite the prejudice, Boston embraced the abolitionist movement and became a prominent proponent in ending slavery.

Many Bostonians enthusiastically greeted the opening of hostilities that would change the face of America.[140] Abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison warned

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[137] Ibid., 6.

[138] Ibid., 5, 14.

[139] Ibid., 10.

[140] Ibid., 50.

supporters that despite the bloodshed they should support President Lincoln, even though he did not initially pursue emancipation as forcefully as they wanted. Many prominent citizens of Massachusetts, including Bostonians, helped organize and recruit regiments to send to the war. Women in Boston supported the war by taking roles as nurses or participating in relief societies for the soldiers. The relief societies aided communications between the soldiers and their families as well as providing support to families. For many women, the war provided them with new skills and changed the manner in which they saw themselves.

Those Bostonians who witnessed the fierce determination of the Southern resistance and high-caliber leadership understood that war would be a long, bloody event. Even when the Union Army forced the South into a purely defensive position and achieving victories, Bostonians still realized that the end was a long time away. The South suffered from devastation and hunger from their defensive position, but their determination enabled them to continue fighting. No matter how long the war took, the North was able to sustain themselves with their variety of industry and excellent infrastructure.

For most of the middle and upper classes in Boston, life went on pretty much the same as it did during peace. Northerners made some minor adjustments since commodities like cotton were more difficult to obtain. Even at the height of the war, the North imported grain from Europe and did not suffer from shortages of food, clothing or luxury goods.[141] This was entirely different in the South, which endured the results of the North's blockade of its ports. Zitella Cocke was forced to support and care for her

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[141] Ibid., 165.

family, but her Boston contemporaries were living much the same as before. Boston's families enjoyed the fineries of clothing, books, papers and other luxuries while their Southern sisters wore homespun clothes and worked in fields to provide sustenance for their families. Boston continued building despite the ongoing war. In actuality, the buildings constructed during the wars were more grandiose and elaborate than structures previously built.[142] Life continued in Boston and in the North with few disturbances. The loss of life because of the war was felt by all involved for many years afterwards, but the South suffered greatly at the hands of war. The war was fought primarily on Southern land and this spared the North the sheer destruction that took the South decades to overcome.

As the above discussion demonstrates, the lives of Bostonians during the Civil War differed greatly from that of Zitella Cocke. She was forced into roles that her station in Southern society had not prepared her for. She suffered financial loss and shortages of goods, and spent days working and caring for invalid parents. The citizens of Boston enjoyed the comforts of luxuries and lived lives much as they had before the war. Cocke's life and that of most Bostonians was similar only in that both sides lost loved ones to the fierce military engagements of the war.

It is not surprising that the best known poem and song of the war originated in Boston, the literary capital of the nation. Julia Ward Howe was the wife of Dr. Samuel Gridly Howe. She was an active reformer and humanitarian, who had supported the infamous John Brown, the leader of a slave rebellion in Harper's Ferry, Virginia. After visiting an army camp near Washington, D.C., Julia Howe composed "Battle Hymn of

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[142] Ibid., 169.

the Republic." The poem was very popular among Northerners and was even sung to the tune of "John Brown's Body." Howe viewed the conflict as a fulfillment of God's destiny for mankind and her verse seemed to capture the ideals of the Union.[143] Following the Civil War, Julia Ward Howe participated in the women's suffrage movement and was among the best known of the Boston writers. Her verse was widely read. She embodied the typical Boston woman because she was active in social and political issues and conformed to the accepted conventions and customs of the city.

Zitella Cocke knew Julia Ward Howe personally and had very strong feelings about her and her verse. She believed Howe to be absurdly radical and felt that Bostonians idolized her too much.[144] She even describes her as a "great gas bag."[145] On one occasion, Howe sent someone to Cocke requesting a visit from her. According to the messenger, Mrs. Stinson, Howe thought Cocke's poems were well written. Cocke answered Howe's request by saying, "Mrs. Stinson, as I do not think Mrs. Howe's verse real poetry, I will not go to see her. That Hymn of the Republic is full of false metaphors and really has no sense to it."[146] Despite the feelings that Zitella Cocke had for Julia Ward Howe, Howe still admired Cocke's poetry and requested a place for her in an anthology of New England writers. There was one literary figure that Zitella Cocke

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[143] Ibid., 176-177.

[144] Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Thomas Owen, Montgomery, Ala., October 23, circa 1910s, Zitella Cocke Papers, LPR 161, ADAH. The letter shows that Zitella was rather conservative and really had no use for people that she viewed as radical; this included the women suffragists of the time.

[145] Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Thomas Owen, Montgomery, Ala., February 8, circa 1910s, Zitella Cocke Papers, LPR 161, ADAH. This letter demonstrates Cocke's personality.

[146] Ibid.

greatly admired, Oliver Wendell Holmes. She would often see Holmes taking a walk in the evenings.[147] She could not bring herself to talk to him because she felt that she was not worthy enough to speak with him. In turn, Oliver Wendell Holmes was deeply impressed by one of Zitella Cocke's many works published in a Boston publication.[148]

Zitella Cocke was apparently well liked and admired by her peers in Boston. Why Bostonians admired Cocke may lie in her passion. She was not ashamed of her heritage and she readily voiced her opinion. Though Cocke could be abrasive in her opinions and critiques, she also maintained her genteel nature. Her mother would say, "if you have good blood, show it in your conduct, not in your talk."[149] Cocke apparently took that advice to heart for she was often described by others as being a true lady, aristocratic in nature. She fit into the strict custom of etiquette that Bostonians established because her mother had enforced the ideals of being a highborn lady in her daughters. Cocke always attempted to be a "lady" first, and she most likely added to the atmosphere in the social circles of Boston. Her ability to voice her opinion and the manner in which she stuck to her beliefs made her desirable in the many social clubs in Boston. She established herself in the editorial sections of the regional newspapers, which gave her a forum to discuss social concerns. Despite the influence that Cocke could have had in Boston's society, she chose to spend her days working on her literary and musical compositions. When she voiced her opinion, it was often to correct statements by others or to make a point on more trivial issues than the feminist

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[147] Eborn, An Appreciation of the Life and Writings of Zitella Cocke, 11.

[148] Ibid., 29.

[149] Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Thomas M. Owen, Montgomery, Ala., February 3, circa 1900s, Zitella Cocke Papers, LPR 161, ADAH.

movement.

Her literary and musical works often received favorable reviews from the critics. One in particular, was extremely impressed with her, even writing a long article as a tribute to her.[150] This critic first met Zitella Cocke while she was traveling, which in those days was an arduous, trying affair, and he describes how she retained her refinement despite the hardships of travel. The critic – unidentified other than the statement that he was a literary and musical critic in Boston for over forty years – had met many notable men and women throughout the years, but none impressed him quite like Zitella Cocke.[151]

The critic was first impressed by a series of her poems which he described as "dainty and exquisite."[152] After his first call on Cocke, he developed a friendship with the Southern woman that lasted for years. The article written by the Boston critic provides insight into Cocke's life in Boston, as well as some of the viewpoints on issues around the turn of the century. He describes her as a well-bred lady possessing a poised, meditative nature. She was delicate yet vigorous, as was evident from the five-mile walks she would often take. The author noted that her vigor and fine physique were a contradiction to the belief that Southern ladies were weak creatures. She was selfless and

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[150] The article, "A Critic's Estimate of an Admirable and Talented Woman," was republished in the *Montgomery Advertiser*. There is no indication in what publication the article first appeared or who the author was or when it was published. Despite the lack of identification, the article superbly demonstrates Zitella's personality and opinions.

[151] Ibid.

[152] Ibid. The critic is unidentified, but apparently developed a friendship with Zitella. He met her on several occasions, traveling and at social events.

good mannered which made it a pleasure for couriers and servants to wait on her. According to the critic, Cocke was sensitive and exhibited a readiness to see the good in life. Her uplifting nature was best demonstrated in her religious and children's verses.

The refinement exhibited by Zitella Cocke was admired by many and made her a favorite at social events. Cocke was described by one society lady that "she made a prettiness of eating and sleeping."[153] However, her views on political issues caused frustration among many of Boston's clubwomen. Cocke felt women suffragists were "a terror" and believed that the suffrage movement was creating a "neuter gender."[154] She even called women who ran for office against a man an "it." She did not want the right to vote because she felt that if one voted, then one should be willing to fight as well. Cocke's feeling on the women's suffrage movement did not endear her to many women in Boston, who were active in the movement. One women called her a "man's woman." Another stated, "she is Eighteenth, Nineteenth century, she needs a page and attendant to run before and behind; she doesn't want to pick up her handkerchief."[155] Cocke avoided any public meetings or events where women's rights might be discussed.

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[153] Ibid. Cocke was raised in such a manner that grace and etiquette were part of her nature. Her mother was a woman of rare grace and surely taught her daughters the proper manner in which to perform certain duties. The etiquette of the Victorian age was renowned for its strictness in dictating everything from receiving callers to eating a meal properly.

[154] Ibid.

[155] Ibid. Cocke possessed a well-bred nature that was common in the Southern elite, especially ones from prominent and wealthy families. The region in which she was raised placed significant emphasis on the duties of men and women. She felt it was not the place of women to perform male duties and this is strong evidence of the paternal nature of Southern society before the Civil War. The roles of men and women were strictly drawn in the South and it took many years for those lines to blur.

Zitella Cocke could not stand arrogance and deceit from others. She tended not to answer questions or statements unless addressed directly, as one gentleman learned while attending a party. Cocke was the guest of honor and the gentleman was remarkably conceited throughout the evening. The man directed comments Cocke's way the entire evening and received no comments until the conversation turned to religious matters. The gentleman turned to Cocke and stated he refused to get on his knees for prayer for he felt it would dishonor his manhood and pride. Cocke serenely turned to the man and answered him saying, "You are not alone, sir, in your opinion. I have heard in my life three persons say the same thing. One, in my early girlhood, in the South. He proved himself a poltroon, a backbiter, and a hypocrite; he liked to air his superficial acquaintance with Kant, but professed religion and joined a sect for purposes of his own and was still full of Cant. Those who knew him best told me he was wanting honor and manhood. The second was in the North, a gentleman by birth. He was afterwards saved from arrest on charges of fraudulent dealing by interposition of friends. The third was a woman, not unknown in city and housekeepers whom she visits tell me they are careful to hide bricabrac and valuables when she calls. So you see, sir, you are not alone in your opinion. Doubtless there are others."[156] The man quickly changed the subject of the conversation following Cocke's response. Comments like the above were typical of Cocke who disliked arrogance and false statements.

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[156] Ibid. This quote is indicative of the straightforward manner in which Cocke often addressed persons who made false or arrogant statements. In this same article, the critic and other friends were surprised at the extent to which Zitella was familiar with Biblical text. When asked where she received her Biblical knowledge, she answered by saying, "why you good people left a few Bibles in my country, and I happened to pick one up."

She possessed an intolerance for deceit and arrogance, but she was a generous, self-abnegating soul. Women's clubs felt she could help their organizations and they often pursued her for membership. One woman described her as not being fussy, able to recognize and promote the good in others, and able to win support with ease.[157] Her temperament would have made her a great addition to clubs, and the clubwomen felt that that Zitella Cocke owed a duty to society to be member of clubs, a duty that she obviously could not see. However, Cocke could not support organizations that promoted issues she did not agree with. Beside her feelings about contemporary questions, her early life in the South may have also played a role in her reluctance to participate in clubs. The women's clubs so popular in Boston were rarely seen in the rural South. The humanitarian needs of the South were often supplied by church-related organizations and issues such as a woman's right to vote were not discussed openly. Zitella Cocke apparently was not comfortable in such organizations, though she held memberships in professional clubs relating to music and literature. One club woman described Cocke as a woman that "even the Indians in the mountains would speak of her as the 'queen with the long black veil' and would go out of their way to see her."[158]

The reference to the "long black veil" is interesting and leads to another aspect of Cocke's life in Boston. During her years of residence in Boston, she lost the remaining members of her immediate family. Each death affected her greatly and spawned a wealth

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[157] Ibid.

[158] Ibid. The quote is interesting in its reference to the "long black veil." This is apparently talking about the mourning garb that Cocke worn for the death of her family. Her brother John was murdered in 1893, her brother Fleming died in 1899 and her two sisters would die during the first years of the new century.

of grief-related poetry. Her brother, John Binion Cocke, was the first to die after her arrival in Boston. His death in 1893 was premature and tragic in nature and caused his family much sorrow. The next was Fleming in 1899, followed by Molly in 1903 and Effie in 1907. Zitella Cocke, the oldest child in the family outlived all of her siblings and greatly felt the loss until her death in 1929.

John Binion Cocke's death warrants further discussion because his death created emotional turmoil for Zitella Cocke. She was overwhelmed with sadness and anger at his death and the following murder trial. On May 15, 1893, John Binion Cocke was shot while walking on a street in Marion. The incident seems to have been the culmination of a long-standing dispute with his murderers, Colonel B.M. Huey and his sons. The days preceding his murder were filled with incidents consisting of arguing and cursing. Many threats were exchanged between John Cocke and the Hueys. Both sides threatened that they would shoot the other dead for no more provocation that batting an eye. On the morning of May 15, shooting commenced on the streets of Marion, which left John Binion Cocke struggling for his life. He suffered at least nine wounds made by weapons ranging from pistols to guns loaded with buckshot. The shots appeared to have been fired from several locations in a store Cocke was passing that morning. On May 17, 1893, Cocke died from his wounds at the residence of Dr. O.L. Shivers in Marion.[159] The funeral for Cocke was held at Siloam Baptist Church and apparently was an emotional and moving event.

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[159] *The Marion Standard*, May-July 1893. The newspaper ran articles concerning the trial of the Hueys nearly every week until the completion of the hearings. The articles consist of annotated versions of testimony from witnesses and provide a fairly good view of the proceedings.

If Cocke's death at the hands of others was not bad enough, the trial that followed was extremely difficult on his family. In an attempt to save the men accused of Cocke's assassination, the defense, that included former Alabama governor, Thomas Seay, questioned the character of Cocke. The trial lasted for several weeks and many witnesses were called to the stand to provide accounts of the incident and give character testimony. Most witnesses described John Binion Cocke as a revengeful, dangerous man who armed himself everyday. Some testified that he was especially dangerous when he drank excessively. Others described him as a good neighbor and excellent friend. Cocke spoke very highly of her siblings in letters to others and in one describes John as a noble and unswerving friend.[160] Among the many witnesses was Cocke's remaining brother, Fleming. His testimony focused on the ammunition recovered from John's body during the autopsy. He also identified the clothing worn by John on the day of his murder. Another witness was the attending doctor who testified to the wounds and the ammunition recovered from the body. Overall, most of the witnesses in the prolonged trial were there to testify that the Hueys were peace-loving men.[161]

The trial ended in July with a guilty verdict. The trial had an enormous impact on Zitella Cocke's life. For many years, she took an active role in helping John's widow and children. She never again felt quite comfortable in Marion following the murder and trial, even though she would visit family there. She would comment in letters to Thomas

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[160] Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Thomas M. Owen, Montgomery, Ala., February 3, circa 1910s, Zitella Cocke Papers, LPR 161, ADAH. The letter gives a description of her family members. In this letter Zitella uses the name Binion for her brother John; this may be the name by which the family called him.

[161] *The Marion Standard*, May-July 1893.

and Marie Owen that she was sorrowed by the incidents and feared that no one in Alabama cared for her. She also expressed a desire to come home and wished to be buried in the state.[162]

Zitella Cocke resided in Boston for nearly thirty years before she returned to Alabama to spend her remaining years. During those thirty years of residence in Boston, Cocke demonstrated that she possessed a talent for writing and she received recognition for her works from people throughout the world. Cocke demonstrated a talent for writing anything from poetry to music, and she broadened her talents by studying music in Europe before seeking her career in literature.[163] Her first achievements in literature were translations of French and German works such as *Child and Woman*, by Clementine Helm, which she did for the Boston Public Library.[164] She sold her first poem while she lived in Marion for twenty dollars but still needed to give music lessons since her sister was still dependant on her support at the time.[165] She wrote and published three volumes of poetry, *The Doric Reed* (1897); *Cherokee Rose and Other Southern Poems* (1907); and *The Grasshoppers' Hop and Other Verses* (1901). Cocke debated publishing a new

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[162] Letters from the Zitella Cocke Papers, LPR 161, ADAH. The letters to Thomas and Marie Owen are a fountain of information and provide personal insights into Zitella Cocke's life. The sentences above include information that was often repeated and scattered throughout the letters in the Cocke's Papers.

[163] Eborn, An Appreciation of the Life and Writings of Zitella Cocke, 9-10

[164] Benjamin Buford Williams, *A Literary History of Alabama: The Nineteenth Century*, (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleign Dickinson University Press, 1979), 132.

[165] Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Thomas M. Owen, Montgomery, Ala., February 8, circa 1910s, Zitella Cocke Papers, LPR 161, ADAH.

volume of poems with new pieces but her health interfered with the plans and she never actually produced the work.[166] She also contributed many essays, stories and poems to newspapers such as *The Boston Transcript*, *The Youth Companion*, and *The New England Magazine*.[167]

Zitella Cocke generally received favorable criticism for her writing from critics throughout the nation. Her volume *Cherokee Rose and Other Southern Poems* generated many reviews for its vivid verses. The *Boston Herald* stated that her poems "are the outcome of a true poetic instinct, hence their popularity."[168] Concerning the opulence of her verses in the *Cherokee Rose* volume, the *New York Tribune* described then as possibly "too opulent in color as the chant proceeds, but by the time the last line is reached there is such a sense of veritable nature conveyed to the reader that all objection to the poet's rhetoric vanishes."[169] Her other books received criticism similar to the verses in *Cherokee Rose*. The volume of children's poems, *The Grasshopper's Hop*, was often described as delightful and filled with wisdom. As the above criticisms demonstrate, Zitella Cocke's poems were generally greeted with favor by the literary world. However the most touching criticism that Cocke received was from her washerwoman. The lady told Cocke, with tears in her eyes, "O, Miss Cocke, that poem

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[166] Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Thomas M. Owen, Montgomery, Ala., November 10, 1912, Zitella Cocke Papers, LPR 161, ADAH.

[167] Eborn, An Appreciation of the Life and Writings of Zitella Cocke, 14.

[168] Zitella Cocke Papers, LPR 161, ADAH.

[169] Ibid.

of yours 'Grief' went to my heart."[170] Statements like that touched Zitella Cocke much more than any published criticism, and she was proud to have received the heartfelt comment of her washerwoman. An example of the high regards other writers had for Cocke can be seen in the many verses and lines sent to her for critiques and comment. She would often receive pieces from Maine to Arkansas.[171] While writing essays and poems, Zitella Cocke did not forget her affinity and talent for music and she continued composing music as well as teaching the children of prominent Boston families and Harvard students. Among her original musical compositions are "Farewell," "La Belle Sophie," "Beaux of Virginia," "Easter Carol and Christmas Carol," and two cradlesongs "What Baby Must Do" and "Where Does the Sandman Get his Sand."

An analysis of the literary legacy left by Cocke shows there are three particular fields in which she was particularly interested: nature, religion and people. But she possessed a broad knowledge in many subjects from history to death. She left behind a literary legacy of at least 291 poems (238 of which are found in her three poetry volumes) several short stories and essays, and eleven musical compositions.[172] The poetry examined can be found in Appendix B and are examples of her favorite subjects of nature, people and religion, and it is in these areas that she left the largest number, and probably the best, poems of her career. She also wrote poetry intended for children and

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[170] Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Marie B. Owen, Montgomery, Ala., September 15, circa 1910s, Zitella Cocke Papers, LPR 161, ADAH. In this specific letter, Cocke describes to Marie Owen what her life was like as a writer and relays stories of traveling in Europe. She also tells how her parents were regarded by some prominent members of Marion's society.

[171] Ibid.

[172] Eborn, An Appreciation of the Life and Writings of Zitella Cocke, 77.

her works in that area are timeless. The poems included in Appendix B are only a sampling of the 291 pieces left by this poet.

This study of Cocke's poems will include examples from the subject areas of nature, religion and people, as well as examples on history and grief. In the area of nature, the poems examined offer a picture of the natural world as Zitella Cocke saw it when she lived in the South. She wrote several poems focused on Alabama and the great natural resources the state possessed. Religion was an essential part of life for Southerners and especially so for Cocke, whose faith helped her through many of the hardships she endured during her life. Her poetry about people opens the lives of her subjects to the reader. Zitella Cocke was fond of using stories from her own family as subjects. Grief was another subject Zitella Cocke often wrote about and her poetry seems to be an outlet for her own grief. She began actively writing during the 1890s, and it was during those years that Zitella Cocke lost all of her siblings. Zitella Cocke also wrote several poems about historic events or people. She wrote at least two poems about the Civil War. She also chose to write pieces on Native Americans, the Revolutionary hero Francis "Swamp Fox" Marion (her hometown was named after Francis Marion), as well as on the kings and queens of Europe. Her children's poetry is among some of Zitella Cocke's best work and one, "Where the Sandman Gets His Sand," was very popular and was put to music. Zitella Cocke wrote about things that she loved, whether the Alabama River or the masters of classical music. The poems provide insight into her life and the things that were most important to her.

Nature provided Cocke with a bountiful supply of subjects, and her life in rural Alabama allowed her to see the splendor of nature first hand. The South was a natural

wonderland compared to the more industrial North and New England area. Her poems add a unique prospective on such subjects as the mimosa tree and a rose. Cocke looked fondly upon and forever immortalized many aspects of nature in verses. She enjoyed the natural world and seemed to feel akin to the animals, plants and rivers of her native state.

"The Mimosa Tree" was the first poem Cocke wrote and later in life, she fondly looked upon it and remembered her childhood. As a child, she would often sit on a window ledge of her home gazing upon the mimosa tree. Zitella Cocke began composing verses about the tree at the age of seven. As she wrote her verses, she sent the notes to her mother under the breakfast plate and those notes were read, corrected and returned.[173] Beginning with "The Mimosa Tree," Cocke would create nearly three hundred poems.

"The Mimosa Tree" describes the very nature of the tree. This was one of Zitella Cocke's shorter poems but it still encapsulates a small portrait of the tree. For many people the mimosa tree is an undesired plant and is generally considered a pest. It is an oriental tree that is visually beautiful, with filigree leaves and feathery blossoms. It also reproduces wildly and can easily take over in areas where it is planted. The mimosa is not a particularly strong tree and has no real purpose other than as an ornament in a yard. Despite the shortcomings of the tree, Cocke looked upon the mimosa with love. The poem captures the very charm of the tree and engages the senses with its descriptive prose. The reader can almost indulge in the fragrance of the blooms and the beauty of the feathery flowers. Cocke also includes the sweet voice of the mockingbird and beauty of the hummingbird. Readers not familiar with the mimosa would be able to visualize the

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[173] Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Thomas M. Owen, Montgomery, Ala., February 8, circa 1910s, Zitella Cocke Papers, LPR 161, ADAH.

leaves closing at dusk and unfurling with the coming of the sun. The poem brings forward an appreciation of nature and of the purpose the tree played in the natural world. This tree provides a hiding place and nourishment for the hummingbird, "whose amorous kiss/Disdains on blossom's lip to miss."(l. 29-30) It also possessed a protection mechanism in which it saves itself from the cold and collects the needed sunrays for its own nourishment as described here, "With open arms she welcomes the day/But night's cold wooings vainly pray."(l. 11-12) This poem demonstrates that Zitella Cocke understood the workings of nature very well.

The "Cherokee Rose" is another example of a nature poem. The Cherokee Rose was apparently a bountiful flower in Perry County and divided the wide fields of the plantation on which she was born. The blossoms of the flower often "flashed upon the 'inward eye'" although she had not seen them in many years.[174] "The Cherokee Rose" begins by describing the various foreign species of roses such as:

"Persia's graceful proud sultanas,
Provence darlings, burning Tuscans,
Sunny Sevìlle's regal daughters" (l. 3-5)

Cocke continues by describing those roses blooming on lawns and terraces like "queens of ancient tourney/Peerless in their high-born beauty."(l. 7-8) These roses were aristocratic in nature but in her mind nothing compares to the timeless beauty of the native and humble Cherokee Rose. As the poem progresses, Cocke goes on to describe

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[174] Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Edmund C. Stedman, Bronnville, N.Y., June 8, 1897, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University Library. This letter is the only known reference to Zitella being born and raised on a plantation

the physical appearance of the rose and compares its snow-white color to the purity vestal virgins of ancient Rome. After describing her beloved rose, she tells the reader how this beautiful creation of nature is not only delicate but strong in the face of the adversity of winter. The Cherokee Rose climbs to the tops of trees and remains bright with life even as the heavy rains and snow of winter fall upon it. It is here that Cocke hopes in her own adversity that she would "be brave like thee/ Dauntless rose of Cherokee."(l. 32-33) As the poem ends, the reader sees that the cycle of life begins again with the coming of spring. In the last stanza, Cocke introduces her favorite creature, the mockingbird. The mockingbird can be found in several other poems, including the poem devoted entirely to the bird.

Examination of " The Cherokee Rose" reveals a useful lesson. She is asks the reader to look beyond the aristocratic appearance of a selection of roses and look upon the beauty of the American native rose. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, everything European was the craze. There was a general feeling that European was better, but it seems that Zitella Cocke advocated in this poem that America offers something more beautiful than anything found elsewhere in the world. For her, the beauty of the Cherokee Rose could not be less than that of other foreign species. This flower was not just beautiful, it was strong in the face of adversity and was a survivor. She is describing more than just a flower in this poem; she is also showing how great and beautiful the American spirit could be in the face of adversity.

The poem "Sunrise in the Alabama Canebrake" incorporates Cocke's love view of nature and Alabama. The poem sings as the reader progresses through the sunrise in Alabama. She describes the awaking of nature as the sun begins its journey across the

sky. The reader revels in the slants of the sunbeams, "The lordly sun, rising from underworld/Shoots yellow beams aslant the tangled brake,"(l. 1-2) and the sounds of wildlife stirring in the canebrake.[175] Zitella Cocke names each bird in a procession of color, sound and beauty. The description of the songs and the brilliant rainbow of feathers paints a beautiful picture. In the poem, she also describes the luscious scents of jasmine, muscadine, and honeysuckle. As nature wakes for another day, Zitella Cocke indulges most of the reader's senses, from sight to smell. She paints a vivid picture of the sunrise in her native state, and does so with obvious love and admiration for the beauty of Alabama.

Zitella Cocke wrote over seventy poems on nature.[176] She loved nature and seemed to be at home in the country. This may have been a product of her early life spent growing up in the rural Black Belt area of Alabama. The town of Marion, Alabama, has not changed much since Cocke's childhood. It is easy to see how someone would develop a great love of nature in the quaint little town in which everything revolved around the raising and harvesting of crops. Alabama, the state that Cocke loved so much, inspired her to write some of her best works.

Religion was another favorite subject in the poetry of Zitella Cocke. She examined the faith of Christians, especially the aspect of laying down their life for Christ. Cocke was a very religious person, but this was not uncommon for her generation. She would often write in her letters that she wished she could live up to the standards set for

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[175] A canebrake is a dense ticket of cane. Canebrakes could be found in marshes and swampy areas of the South.

[176] Eborn, An Appreciation of the Life and Writings of Zitella Cocke, 160.

her by her Lord. She would also comment on the fact that some families were removing Christ from their homes, and this was the reason for the worsening state of children's manners and behaviors.

The poem, "My Cross," was received well by Christians throughout the world, and she related stories about this poem in particular. While traveling in Scotland, she entered into a Bible store and was asked to register her name. After doing so, the attendant looked at her and led her to a window where "The Cross" was on display. Another incident in Britain occurred while she was attending a church there and heard the clergyman read "My Cross" to the congregation. This poem seemed to strike a cord for many people and it was included in Burton Egbert Stevenson's *Homer Book of Verse*.[177]

"My Cross" expresses the desire to live the life that all Christians are commanded to by God. The image of taking up the cross is often expressed in sermons and is the burden that followers of Christ must carry. To live as a Christian is not a life of ease but one of security. The poem expresses that security in the fact that God knows and understands the burdens that "His children can endure."(l. 15) It also describes the desire of people to grasp control of their own lives. In this poem, she describes fashioning her own cross, thinking that she knew better, but then finding her cross "now weighs like stone."(l. 8) The poem eventually concludes by her asking the Lord for help and having the burden lifted from her shoulders. The poem demonstrates the paradox of Christian life. On the one hand humans desire to control their own lives but as Christians they must learn to humble themselves before God and allow Him to guide their lives.

In the poem, "Bethlehem" Cocke recreates the birth of Jesus Christ. She

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[177] Ibid., 20-21.

describes the tenderness and humility of the shepherds and the kings. She presents a picture of pure love and faith in the birth of Jesus. Her faith in Jesus Christ and His unconditional love is seen in all of her religious poems, but none better than "Bethlehem." Cocke describes the scene as shepherds and kings visit the infant Christ.

"A new-born infant smiled,
And seraphs bright with song looked down
Upon the Holy Child.
Shepherds their Shepherd saw, amazed,
And bowed them to the floor,
Kings on a mightier monarch gazed,
And gave Him costly store.
But she, whose silent pondering
In paths prophetic trod,
Knew she had borne the Holy Thing
Which was the Lamb of God."(l.14-24)

Her simple faith was revealed in much of her poetry and can be seen in poems written about the Christian holidays of Easter and Christmas. Many consider these tributes to the birth and resurrection of Christ her best poems. Religion was an important and vital part of her life, and she gave it a fitting and eloquent tribute through her verse.

Death was a common theme for Zitella Cocke because it seemed to her that death surrounded her life. She lost one of her brothers at Gettysburg and her father died shortly after the Civil War. It is almost certain that she lost friends to the ravages of war because the little town of Marion enthusiastically embraced the Civil War. Later she would

witnessed her own mother slowly pass through illness into death. She lost another brother die from gunshot wounds and the rest of her family from various other causes.[178] When she herself died in 1929, she was the only one of her family left outside of nieces and nephews.

The poem, "The Dead Mother," was surely inspired by the death of her mother, whom she had cared for during her youth. From an analysis of the poem, one could easily imagine that the child at the end was Zitella Cocke herself crying for her mother to return to her. There is a desperation felt in the mother's reaction to the child's voice, "My child! – In Paradise I hear thy plaint!/O God! – Grant me its steps to guide,/And I ask naught beside."(l. 26-28) It seems that Cocke hoped her mother would have had a similar reaction following her death. She despaired about the deaths of her family, because she knew that they were going to better places, but in the physical world it hurt deeply.

In "The Dead Mother," Zitella Cocke describes both the relief and the anxiety of death. On the one hand, the mother is calmed and reassured by death because he has been promised a place in Paradise as described here, "Yet I am calm, with calmness of the dead/Who, by the love of God, are comforted."(l. 21-22) As each person files in to see her still body, she hears the kind words and rekindled friendships. She also hears her husband beseech her to return to him. Despite all the things she heard up to that point, it was not enough to woo her back. In the last stanza, the young child comes forward, crying out for her mother. This alone was enough to cause the dead mother anxiety over her death. The desire to stay on earth and care for that child urged her to ask God for

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[178] Ibid., 9-11.

guidance to help her child. This poem includes a conflict of peace and sorrow. The dead mother welcomes her own entry into Paradise. Once the mother realizes that she must leave behind her child she demonstrates sorrow for leaving the physical world behind.

Overall, she wrote one hundred poems about people. She would write about all types of people ranging from Pontius Pilate to Wordsworth. Never did she blame people for their actions, as in the case of Pontius Pilate, but she tries to explain them plainly. She also wrote on subjects such as the heroism of the sailors on the *Titanic*, motherhood, and people's grief. Being a musician, she had a great appreciation for the masters of musical composition and she dedicated poems to Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Schubert, and Schumann as well as Mendelssohn. Among the poems on children, she wrote on the differing types of boys, such as the idle boy or the patriotic boy. Those poems that were written about girls featured mostly good girls who enjoyed playing, working and studying.[179] All of these demonstrate Zitella Cocke's love of people. She tried through her poetry to teach lessons on the proper behavior of boys and girls, and to illustrate the greatness of poets and musicians.

She also used poetry to tell the stories of her own family heritage. The power, wealth and prominence of her family provided an abundance of information for her poems. Her family participated in many historic events and its fame was passed down through the generations. In the poem "My Great-Great Uncle's Wife" Zitella Cocke tells the reader the story about her aunt's life. The aunt named Celeste was a woman of conviction and a Huguenot follower of Henry of Navarre. Celeste lived during the fearful years of Huguenot persecution in France, where in "Terror's Reign, when every

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[179] Ibid., 115-124.

home/Of France was held 'suspect'."(l. 19-20) With "woman's wit" Celeste "contrived the plan/To cheat the ear of Robespierre,/And all his murderous clan."(l. 21-24) That plan was to use a cask of beer as a hiding place to escape France aboard an outgoing ship. Celeste was a brave woman who hid in a cask of beer to escape the carnage being inflicted upon many Huguenots in France. Cocke was proudly descended from Huguenots and she spoke with pride when telling about her family and their exploits. The experiences of the Huguenots were trying and many did what they could to save themselves. The Huguenots were persecuted for their religious convictions and this poem demonstrates how desperate many were to leave France.

The poem "Beethoven" is a tribute to one of the masters of music. As a musician, Cocke possessed a great love for the classical masters and she wrote many poems dedicated to them. In this poem, Cocke describes in poetic language the pure and serene beauty of the music written by Beethoven. She described Beethoven as "Sublimest Master, thou, of harmony,/From whose untroubled depths serenely flow/The sinuous streams of sweetest melody."(l. 1-3) Cocke taught students to perform pieces written by Beethoven and Chopin and her love for them passed into her writings. Cocke loved music and she possessed a great talent for voice, playing instruments and composition. Music also provided Cocke with the ability to support herself and her family early in her life. This poem on Beethoven expresses the love that Zitella Cocke possessed for his compositions. She describes the purity and serenity of his music. She also states how must be God pleased with Beethoven's musical creations, because "God's harmony thy prayer hath satisfied."(l. 6) For Cocke, Beethoven left a legacy that would continue to inspire people throughout the years with the "pure, celestial fire."(l. 14)

Zitella Cocke composed at least two poems about the Civil War. The Civil War changed the entire society of the South, ending slavery as its labor system. The war changed Cocke's life forcing her to care for and support her family. Her brother, Madison, died in battle at Gettysburg but fortunately Cocke's other brother survived the war. The hardships caused by war did not end at Appomattox but lingered for many years.

The poem, "Blue and the Gray," is obviously about the dead from the Civil War. The war created conflicting emotions for many Americans North and South, and some accused Zitella Cocke of being disloyal to the South by moving to the North. She fought this accusation adamantly. She always defended the South in the face of Northern ignorance, but also realized that the war was fought not only by Southerners but also by the Northern soldiers. The poem attempts to address the issue that men died for their beliefs on both sides of the conflict. It did not matter whether men fought for the Union or Confederacy because death was blind. The loudness and violence of war are echoed in the first stanza when Cocke described the "war-cry fierce and shrill."(l. 3) Cocke's description of the battlefield is filled reality that many ignored but the war's dead had "Felt the battles shock and thrill,/Heard dreadful cannons roar,-/Death behind and death before."(l. 4-6) The poem goes on to portray the peaceful rest of the men who suffered such violent deaths. Cocke repeats the line "Very peacefully they rest" at the beginning of each stanza. The poem most likely served as a comfort for Cocke, since her brother died in the heat of a bloody, violent battle. The poem possesses a quality that comforts those on either side of the Mason-Dixon Line for the deaths of the thousands of men and boys during the Civil War.

"Miss Nancy's Gown" is poem about a gown once owned by a family member. When asked to recite her favorite poem, Zitella Cocke would often proceed to tell the story of Miss Nancy's gown. This poem talks about an actual dress that was brought over from England for an ancestor of Cocke. The gown became a source of pride and was kept in the family for many years.[180] The poem also discusses the woman who wore the gown. Nancy apparently was a beauty of her time and had the wealth to purchase such a fine gown. Nancy's gown was the latest fashion with "The plaited waist from neck to belt/Scarce measure half a span,/The sleeves, balloon-like, at the top/Could hold her feather fan."(l. 9-12) The skirt was allowed Nancy to reveal "an ankle neat,/Whene'er she put her dainty foot/From carriage-step to street."(l. 14-16) Nancy attending a ball in this poem at which she danced "hand in hand with Washington,/Hero of the day."(l.37-38) The fact that she attended a ball at which she could dance with George Washington indicates the prominence of the family. Zitella Cocke was very proud of her family's heritage and took any opportunity to talk about it. There is no doubt that she came from a famous and wealthy family, on both the side Cocke side and the Binion side. From personal interviews, Mary Lula Eborn tells the reader that Zitella Cocke was a delicate, graceful, kind and aristocratic lady.[181] She possessed honor and pride, the same honor and pride that can be found in the poem, "Miss Nancy's Gown."

The final poems discussed in this chapter are examples of two of Cocke's children's poems. "Fishing and Wishing" concerns three children, Tom, Ned and Moll. In the poem, the children "Three little folk by the meadow brook,/With a line of twine

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[180] Eborn, An Appreciation of the Life and Writings of Zitella Cocke, 23.

[181] Ibid., 5-13.

and bent pin hook" go fishing.(l. 1-2) As the day passes, each child begins to make wishes for things like gold or ships on the sea. The first two wishes made by the boys are greedy in nature for they wish for riches. Tom wishes for "a pot of gold/With every minute that had been told."(l. 11-12) Through his wish, Tom would have more money than he could every use. Ned wishes that he could have "the ships at sea,/And all that is in them."(l. 16-17) Ned's wish would grant him great wealth. But Moll by far has the smartest wish of all for she wishes that the two boys get their wishes and "give them to me, - now, Tom and Ned,/I've got the most by wishing."(l. 24-25) As selfless as the wish may sound, the rest of her wish reveals that she also wants the boys to give their riches to her. The poem hearkens back to childhood and the joys of making wishes, playing and fishing with friends.

The second juvenile poem, "Where the Sandman Gets His Sand," was set to music composed by Cocke. The poem describes the Sandman galloping across the sky scattering sand upon the eyes of little children as they drift to sleep. Despite the fact that each child fights off sleep, the power of the Sandman's sand cannot be withstood as he scatters "What he holds within his hand."(l. 14) The sleep that each child receives following the Sandman's ride prepares them for the following day and fills them with vigor. The children awake the morning following the Sandman's visit "fresh and new/As pretty little rosebuds,/With their faces washed in dew."(l.26-28) Many of the pieces provided some type of lesson and almost all were published in the various children's books and magazines of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Cocke's juvenile poetry still retain relevance today because contain timeless subjects and morals, and incorporates activities that children still enjoy.

Zitella Cocke's fame was based mostly on her poetry but she also wrote essays and short stories. She wrote for children and adults alike and published in magazines and newspapers. The subjects ranged from dolls, etiquette, nature, to the kings and queens of Europe. Cocke addressed issues such as obedience of children, proper dress and speech, and the art of letter writing. Cocke possessed strong views on many subjects, as was demonstrated in her response to the women's suffrage movement. Cocke's pieces of prose were the product of the era in which she lived. Essays on manners, gossiping, dress, obedience, and the role of women were definitely aimed at the people of the day. The works also used language and references that would be lost on many of today's readers. The essays and short stories provide additional insight into life during the late Victorian age in America.

Zitella Cocke had always possessed a propensity for music and her education at Judson College provided her with a greater understanding of it. The Judson College Archives includes a small original musical composition written in Cocke's hand during her attendance at the school. Cocke wrote at least eight musical compositions, some were Tennyson's poems set to music and one was her own poem set to music. The other pieces were all original. The Library of Congress has at least five of Cocke's pieces of music and the Judson College Archives has "Where the Sandman Gets His Sand" which was set to music and published. She wrote for a variety of voices and instruments, as well as for different genres of music, such as waltzes and lullabies. Her range of musical composition was as broad as her talent as a singer, pianist and guitarist.

Zitella Cocke won recognition throughout the world for her literary and musical legacy. She wrote on subjects from nature to history. She wrote about things she knew

and loved, using her homeland of Alabama, the grief of her life, her family, and religion as an inspiration for many works. She left a legacy of over three hundred poems, nearly ten musical compositions and many short stories and essays. Despite the legacy left by Cocke, Alabama's citizens never really embraced her like those in New England. Though she received favorable criticism in many Alabama newspapers, the books never sold as well in the South. When asked by publishers why her books did not sell well in the South, Cocke would reply, "You have taken the living of the South, how can you expect her to buy books!"[182] She knew that the life was hard in the region following the war and she never expressed bitterness. Some Alabamians may have viewed her move to Boston as a treasonous act against the ideals of the "Lost Cause." It is most likely that Alabama's and the South's lack of interest in Cocke's books was a combination of bitterness and the lack of funds to purchase the books. However, Cocke became a popular author in New England and Europe and she produced an extensive literary legacy.

Beginning in the mid 1910s Cocke's health took a turn for the worse and she returned to Alabama in 1918, a few years after she was afflicted with blindness. Cocke would comment in letters to the Owens of Montgomery that she suffered from lumbago and would be ordered to bed rest by her physician.[183] After her return to Alabama, she resided in Mobile during the early 1920s before living with her niece, Molly Cocke

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[182] Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Thomas M. Owen, Montgomery, Ala., October 23, 1908, Zitella Cocke Papers, LPR 161, ADAH.

[183] Zitella Cocke, Boston, Mass., to Thomas M. Owen, Montgomery, Ala., February 8, circa 1910s, Zitella Cocke Papers, LPR 161, ADAH.

Denman, in Gadsden, Alabama.[184] Cocke lived out her last nine years in her homeland and despite her blindness she filled those years by continuing to write poetry.

In 1921, the Alabama Legislature honored Cocke with a joint resolution expressing appreciation for her works. W.B. Alexander, a Perry County representative, introduced the resolution with the help of D.B. Cobbs, a Mobile lawyer.[185] The full text of the resolution can be found in Appendix C. D.B. Cobbs was a friend of Cocke's and helped her with her affairs during her residence in Mobile. She resided in Mobile at least until 1922, when she is listed in the *Mobile City Directory* for 1922. During her residence in Mobile, Cocke lived at the Mobile Benevolent Home, which was located on Government Street. The Mobile Benevolent Home was established in 1829 and was supported by charitable gifts of Mobile's citizens. The home provided a place for aged women to spend their remaining years without concern for material needs. Most women who resided at the home did not have relatives nearby to take care of them. The home did not have an established routine for its residents, but the women would spend their days sewing, reading, and talking. The Mobile Benevolent Home continued its valuable service at least into the 1950s.[186] Blindness and failing health kept Cocke from financially supporting herself during the 1920s, so she resided in this charitable organization before her final years with Molly Denman.

Her last days were spent in the home of her beloved niece, Molly Denman Cocke. Despite the blindness that had afflicted her for many years, Zitella Cocke remained active

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[184] Eborn, An Appreciation of the Life and Writings of Zitella Cocke, 12.

[185] *Judson Alumnae Magazine*, June 1922, pg. 26, Judson College Archives.

[186] Vertical File on Mobile Benevolent Home. Local History and Genealogical Department, Mobile Public Library.

and maintaining and interest in politics and civic and social affairs. She enjoyed engaging in conversations with people and continued singing up to her death. She would often be heard singing hymns in the Denman home and seemed to get pleasure and comfort from song. Her voice had maintained the culture of years gone by despite the occasional waver. Cocke briefly fell ill from pneumonia, but her mind remained as active as ever. Her last words, said before she retired one night, were "Now turn on the radio."[187] With those words, she fell asleep and passed away on December 3, 1929.

Zitella Cocke's body was returned to Marion on December 4, 1929, to be laid to rest in the Marion Cemetery. Her wish had been to be buried in the cemetery in her hometown, near her beloved family including her parents and grandparents. The funeral service was held St. Wilfred's Episcopal Church and was conducted by the rector, Reverend Livingston. Though Cocke left this world, she left behind a legacy that reaches across the decades. An extensive collection of poetry, essays, short stories and music are a mirror that shows the modern reader a picture of her life and her passions. Her writings sing to the reader and paint a beautiful picture, but they are also indicative of the writing styles of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The prose and structure of her works are not as common in works today but are still beautiful and timeless.

[187] Eborn, An Appreciation of the Life and Writing of Zitella Cocke, 12-13.

Zitella Cocke

CONCLUSION

Why study the life and works of Zitella Cocke? Who was this woman and what lessons can be learned from her experiences? Why is she important to historians and history in general? This thesis attempts to place Zitella Cocke into the fabric of history and describe how her life was different from that of many Southern women. This woman was born during the height of the antebellum era of the South. She not only witnessed the Civil War, she participated in it through her involvement in a flag presentation. Though she moved to Boston, once a hotbed for the abolitionist movement, she continued to document and celebrate the South she loved through poetic verses. Despite tragedy in her life, she continued to live a full, independent life while remaining true to her Southern upbringing. Always polite and gracious, she voiced her opinion especially concerning the feminist movement and the state of the South. She was never ashamed of her Southern heritage; in fact she embraced it whole-heartedly. She was a paradox of modern feminist ideals, like independence and strength, and the Old South's conservative patriarchal system that placed women on pedestals and required from be submissive. She was always a Southern lady, unwavering in her beliefs, yet she was strong enough to endure anything from war to death, defying the idea of women as weak creatures.

The daughter of a Southern planter from the Cocke family of Virginia and a mother of French Huguenot descent, Cocke was a remarkable woman who witnessed the Civil War, Reconstruction and the birth of the twentieth century.[188] She possessed

[188] Townes, *The History of Marion, Alabama*, 15; Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography*, 366.

immense literary and musical talent and left a substantial legacy of poetry, prose and music after her death in 1929. She was an accomplished musician who played the piano and guitar, sang, and composed music. She translated works from French and German, both of which she fluently spoke, into English. Her greatest talent, however, lay in her ability to write poetry. Cocke's literary works sing to the reader, opening eyes to the beauty of the South, the devastation of war, and the heartbreak of death, as well as the joy that religion can bestow upon the soul.

She resided in Boston for nearly three decades until ill health and the urgings of her doctors forced her back to her native state. Despite blindness and ill health, she continued to write, and her compositions received favorable recognition internationally, especially in Canada and Great Britain. Her works were translated into several languages, and volumes of her poetry could be found in the collections of several leading libraries in Europe. The Author's Club of London elected her to membership in 1910, and she was honored with lifetime memberships to music and author's clubs in Alabama. New England and Europe quickly recognized her talent, but her hometown of Marion recognized her chiefly for her participation in a Civil War flag presentation. It was not until the 1920s that Alabama recognized her contributions to the literary and musical legacy of the state.

The South never bestowed upon Cocke the same level of recognition for her literary efforts as New England and Europe. She never held grudges for the lack of attention from her home state and region, because she knew that the South had just begun to emerge from the devastation of war and federal occupation. The Civil War and Reconstruction had forced Cocke into roles that the Antebellum South had perceived as

demeaning for "ladies." She became the primary caregiver and supporter of her family, working at Judson Female Institute's music department to provide financial support. After the death of her parents and once her youngest sister finished school, Cocke was able to move to Boston where she was closer to the great publishing houses of America. Her years in Boston proved fruitful, with the composition of at least 290 poems, in addition to her prose and musical works. The South was never far from her thoughts and heart, for she immortalized its features and creatures in many of her verses and prose. Poems like "Sunrise in the Alabama Canebrake" and "Cherokee Rose" gave readers throughout the United States and Europe an intimate glimpse into the world Cocke remembered with fondness from her childhood.

Zitella Cocke's writings open the doors to understanding her. She demonstrates an intimate knowledge of a broad spectrum of subjects in all her writings; a reader could easily find stories of European kings and queens alongside poems on the Alabama River or the mockingbird. Many of her poems paralleled her own life, some even tell readers about her illustrious family history. Her intimate knowledge of the Southern landscape, grief and the Civil War came from her experiences. She knew how the mockingbird sounded, how terrible the Civil War truly was, and what it felt like to lose a mother. Physical separation from the South and her family did not hinder her, because she remembered with such detail and fondness that the miles could not diminish the effect as she put her memories to paper. Her poetry allowed readers to glimpse into a vivid, exciting world, a world brimming with life, yet one that suffered from the devastation of war and death. Cocke did not allow others into her life in her letters; she often felt unworthy of attention. True understanding of her life comes from her poetry, which was

a vehicle for her to show others who she was.

Zitella Cocke's experiences caring for her family at an early age, especially her fragile, sickly mother, are seldom seen in historical studies. Women, especially those in the South, were expected to quietly assume the role of caregiver and homemaker. Zitella Cocke, however, took those roles during her childhood as she aided her mother during many bouts of illness. Cocke became the primary means of support for the family during the Civil War when her father fell ill. Her father's death in the late 1860s increased the strain on her fragile mother, and Cocke once again aided her family by shouldering the burden of providing for them. Cocke survived the Civil War, which claimed a brother and deteriorated the health of both parents, and worked at Judson Female Institute to support her family. Her life during these early years witnessed her development as a Southerner in a quickly changing world. She did what was needed to survive the hardships of life during the trying years of war and reconstruction in the South.

Cocke's early experiences strengthened her, making her more independent and able to survive on her own. Why she deviated from the expected role of wife is unknown. It is possible that the strain and need to care for her family kept her from marriage, but she also may have lost a love interest during the Civil War. Whatever the reason, Cocke remained single and independent throughout her life. Though she criticized women involved in the feminist movement, she can be seen as an example of female strength and endurance. She survived trials and hardships that many never experienced and she obtained success as a writer. To a degree she was the typical daughter of the Antebellum South for she possessed the innate grace and manners attributed to Southern ladies. Yet she was unique because she possessed a strong,

independent personality and passion not associated with Antebellum Southern women. Zitella Cocke possessed strength under pressure, perseverance in the face of hardship, yet she always remained a lady and maintained her genteel upbringing. She clearly stepped out of the female role dictated by the men of the elite-planter class and exhibited the strength and grace under fire that is so often commended in women today.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

MARION WEEKLY COMMONWEALTH DECEMBER 15, 1860

The following transcription is an excerpt of the original article on the Marion Rifles flag presentation and the speech given by Zitella Cocke on that occasion.

Thursday last was a day of considerable interest to the citizens of our town. In accordance with arrangements previously made, the Flag which had been prepared by the youg {sic} ladies of Marion was presented to the "Marion Rifles." Several volunteer companies from neighboring towns were invited to be present on the occasion; but the "Governor's Guards" from Selma, and the Summerfield Hussar's of Summerfield were the only ones that attended.

Early in the evening a large crows assembled in front of the Judson to witness the presentation ceremonies. The young ladies who had prepared the Flag were arrayed in a row upon a platform erected for the purpose, Miss ZITELLA COCKE, the young lady selected to present the Banner, and M. M. COOKE, Esq., who received the same on the part of the Company, occupying the middle portion of the platform.

So soon as the different companies had taken their position, Miss Cocke was introduced to the audience by L. N. Walthall, Esq., in a very neat and appropriate speech. The Banner was then presented to the Marion Rifles, its presentation being

accompanied by one of the most eloquent and well-timed addresses it has been our good fortune to hear. Mr. Cooke responded in a speech which was well-conceived, well delivered and well received by the audience. – His remarks were often interrupted by the enthusiastic plaudits of the crowd.

At night a large Ball was given by the Marion Rifles, complimentary to the young ladies who presented the Banner, which was attended by the beauty and fashion of the town and surrounding county.

The following is the presentation address delivered by Miss Cocke, on the occasion referred to above:

Breathes there a man with soul so dead,

Who never to himself hath said.

This is my own, my native land?

Land of our sires, what mortal hand

Can e'er untie the filial band

That links us to thy rugged strand.

To die nobly as a patriot, time nor history tells of a prouder, a more glorious death, which

To the hero when his sword

Has won the battle for the free,

It's voice sounds like a prophets word,

And in its hollow tones are heard

The thanks of millions yet to be.

What holier fires can burn upon a nation's altar than those enkindled by the sweet light of life and our home, our country asks no richer boon than the hearts and valor of her sons. Of such conquerors death makes no conquest, for they will live in fame, though not in life. The distinguishing virtue of the true soldier, and, above all the American soldier, is the noble spirit of self sacrifice. "He that is truly delicate to war hath no self-love." His life is his country's, his aims truths, and he knows no monarch save his God. Such men were our illustrious sires, men not enchanted by the glitter of a crown, nor inspired by the hope of aggrandisement, but a heaven born band of heroes, heroes of sentiment and of principle—such men fought and bled on Southern soil, and dying bequeathed their children the glorious legacy of a Southern home. A nation's gratitude enshrines their names among her holiest memories, and the world, proud of such treasure, gives bond in stone and ever during brass to guard them and immortalize her trust.

To you then the noble scions of so majestic a race, to the gallant representatives of the chivalry of Alabama-you who have so heroically consecrated the flower of youth, to your country, do we this day come, bearing in our hearts a thousand glowing hopes and earnest prayers, and in our hands a gift which as its hold inscription floats proudly o'er the tented field—imparts new courage to the sinking arm and sweetly tells how woman's hopes and woman's fears are with you in the strife.

Flag of the brave! thy folds shall fly

The sign of hope and triumph high,

When speaks the signal trumpet's tone,

And the long line comes gleaming on

Ere yet the life-blood warm and wet,

Hath dimmed the glistening bayonet;

To where thy meteor glories burn,

And as his springing steps advance,

Catch war and vengeance from the glance.

Your arms are fair when the intent of bearing them is just. With such a watchword as your standard bears, and such hopes and aims as Southern men must ever have, whatever fate betide, "There is a hand above will help you on." For there's no such word as fail." Guarded by your patriotism and your honor, from the green hills of Tennessee, to the waving prairies of the Lone Star—from the classic plains of the Old Dominion to the futile fields and flowry meads of your own native State—from the chivalrous Palmetto to the sea-beat shores of Florida and Louisiana—your glorious South shall achieve a destiny as high as the hopes that beat in Southern hearts.

What though the howling tempest of fanaticism shall rend New England's rocks in twain, your skies will shed as sweet and soft a radiance as now, the same happy songster shall gladden your forests, and your hills and valleys ever blossom as the rose. And the sweet spirit of Liberty, glorious and lovely in her matchless purity, shall make your happy home her holy temple, while her attendant sisters, blithe Plenty and olive-crowned, heaven-born Art, young Hope and bright-eyed Science, shall unfold to you their richest treasures, and love to linger in a home which your valor has made theirs. Accept then, this offering, which we so cheerfully award, as

an expression of our interest in your future prosperity, our confidence in your valor, and our security in you heroism. Without one fear, without the shadow of gloom across our buoyant hearts do we bring it feeling.

> That you, untainted by flight or by chains
> While the kindling of life in your bosoms remains,
> Shall victors exult on in death be laid low
> With your backs to the field, and your feet to the foe,
> And leaving in battle no blot on your name,
> Look proudly to heaven from your death-bed of fame.

APPENDIX B
SELECTED POEMS USED IN CHAPTER 3

The Mimosa Tree
Taken from *The Cherokee Rose and Other Southern Poems* (1907)

A goodly sight it is to see
The boughs of the Mimosa Tree
And ye shall wander far, I ween,
Ere yet a fairer flower is seen,
Where luscious peach and roses sweet
Their subtle unity complete
To capture sense and charm the eye
Of who would linger Or pass by.

Would learn her lore? So shall ye find
Mimosa hath a constant mind –
With open arms she welcomes day,
But night's cold wooings vainly pray;
Nor sigh nor tear of Eve receives
One token from her sealed leaves.
In sullen silence, close withdrawn
She waits the coming of the dawn.

Ah, then, with joy elate she springs
To greet her lord, the Sun, and flings
Such lure of incense, Mocking-bird gay
On hither wing swift speeds his way,
And of her fragrance-laden air
Weaves sweet music as she is fair,
The while her matting branches gleam
Irradiant with the morning's beam.

Anon, the burning breath of noon
Awakes the haunting bee's bassoon,
When lo! – a flash of living light!
A winged rainbow's circling light!
Blithe Humming-bird, whose amorous kiss

Disdains on blossom's lip to miss,
As to the Day-God she adores
Mimosa all her sweetness pours!

Cherokee Rose
Taken from *The Cherokee Rose and Other Southern Poems* (1907)

Garden roses all are praising, –
Gorgeous urns of balmy incense,
Persia's graceful, proud sultanas,
Provence darlings, burning Tuscans,
Sunny Seville's regal daughters
Blooming on the lawn and terrace
Like the queens of ancient tourney,
Peerless in their high-born beauty;
But one born this side of the sea
Is fairer flow'r to me –
The sweet rose, named Cherokee!

With her loving arms embracing
Cotton-field and broad plantation,
How she cheers the heart of toiler!
And her radiant snow-white blossoms,
Gleaming thro' the moonlight distance,
Seem like bands of white-robed maidens,
Like the sacred vestal virgins
With their lustrous lamps of silver.
But a country flow'ret she,
Yet no rose at court could be
Lovelier than the Cherokee!

When the skies are bleak and bitter,
Bright with life and emerald greenness,
She entwines the naked tree-top,
Glistens thro' the heavy rainfall, –
Sparkles 'neath the frost and snowflake,
Gladd'ning weary miles of highway,
Showing the sweet mind of Summer,
E'en when Winter's hand is on her!
In my drear adversity,
Would I could be brave like thee,
Dauntless rose of Cherokee!

And some morning, ere we know it,
Oh her slender, budding branches

Mocking-bird is proudly singing
Such a romance of the forest
That our hearts are filled with longing,
And the snow-white blossoms hear him,
Know that gentle Spring is coming,
And burst forth in joy to meet her.
        Then the mocking-bird sings free
        Love's triumphant jubilee
        To the rose of Cherokee!

Sunrise in an Alabama Canebrake
Taken from *The Doric Reed* (1897)

The lordly sun, rising from underworld,
        Shoots yellow beams aslant the tangled brake;
Magnolia, with her mirror leaves unfurled,
        Hath caught the glancing radiances that make
Bright aureoles around her virgin bloom –
        A pale Madonna, 'neath her hood of green,
        With unprofaned cheek and brow serene:
The pines upon the uplands merge from gloom
Of night, and with the dawn's intenser glow
Their serried lances bright and brighter grow!

The conquering light ever ascending higher
Fills Alabama's stream with molten fire;
A myriad rays pierce down the wooded slopes
Till forest vistas form kaleidoscopes!
The dogwood blossoms shine like stars of gold,
        Quick flows the amber of the tall sweet gum,
        And swifter still the shifting colors come
        To tulip-tree and luscious-scented plum,
And sassafras, with buddings manifold.

The yellow jasmine and lush muscadine
With crab and honeysuckle intertwine,
And thousand odors sweet confederate,
And clear, cool air so interpenetrate
That sky above and blooming earth beneath
Seem to exhale a long, delicious breath!
But hark! woodpecker beats his dull tattoo,
The jay bird screams, low moans the shy cuckoo,
Loud chirps the blackbird, gently woos the dove,
Till chains of melody link grove to grove;
The red-bird shows his scarlet coat and crest

And sounds his bugle call, while from his nest
In deeper woods the hermit thrush intones,
With heavenly mind, his orisons;
Kingfisher, like a spirit of the air,
His swift flight wheels, circling with rainbow hue
The water's edge; and see! a hawthorn fair
Grows tremulous, for on her tender spray
Sits nature's poet, a romancer gay,
Sweet mocking-bird, singing, as he were fain
To greet the sun with all that bird could say,
Or think or dream within his tiny brain;
Anon, his throat o'erflows with tuneful might,
And straight upon a poplar's topmost height
He flies, and his full diapason sounds.
From stop to stop, and now from side to side,
He flings his clear-toned dithyrambic rounds,
Then, masterly, he runs the gamut wide
Of his rare instrument, till joy and hope
And sweetest love speak from the wondrous scope
In epic majesty, now soft, now strong,
And lo! the air is throbbing with his song!
The climax reached, from bough to bough he drops
With trailing cadences; then in a copse
Below – low, liquid warbles uttering –
He falls with palpitating breast and wing!
Effulgent light illumes the broad blue tent of heaven,
The sleeping Earth awakes to toil: the Sun is risen!

My Cross
Taken from *The Cherokee Rose and Other Southern Poems* (1907)

My Lord would make a cross for me,
But I would none of his;
I thought I better knew than he,
To bear my pain or bliss.

My Lord would make a cross for me,
But I would make my own,
In fashion light as a cross could be,
But now it weighs like stone!

If I had only bowed me low,
To take the cross he laid,
It never would have galled me so,
As this, the one I made.

For oh! his cross is true and sure
In all its breadth and length,
Just what his children can endure,
And measured to their strength.

But I had fainted 'neath the load,
I on myself did lay,
Had he not met me in the road,
And helped me on the way.

Bethlehem
Taken from *The Cherokee Rose and Other Southern Poems* (1907)

Outside the walls of Bethlehem-town,
All the white starlight,
A little lamb walked up and down,
And cried into the night.

No other lambkin of the fold
So flawless and so fair,
No other sound upon the world
fell on the midnight air.

And tenderly the Shepherd said,
"For thee nor gold, nor price,
So pure thou art from foot to head,
Dear Lamb of Sacrifice!"

Inside the walls of Bethlehem-town
A new-born infant smiled,
And seraphs bright with song looked down
Upon the Holy Child.

Shepherds their Shepherd saw, amazed,
And bowed them to the floor,
Kings on a mightier monarch gazed,
And gave Him costly store.

But she, whose silent pondering
In paths prophetic trod,
Knew she had borne that Holy Thing
Which was the Lamb of God.

The Dead Mother
Taken from *The Doric Reed* (1897)

How silent the house! The light peering between
The close-knit vines that o'er the casement lean,
Falls faint and low, – fearing to touch the bed
Where I lie cold and dead!

The bird whose song awoke me with the dawn,
And filled with melody the fragrant lawn,
This morning sang a faltering, plaintive lay,
And then flew swift away!

Fond, weeping friends caress my marble brow
And tell my deeds of good, as they, somehow,
Would fain eke out in tender words and tears
The love of mortal years!

And kindred hands, for many a yearestranged,
Have o'er my form the friendly clasp exchanged,
And I, in death, have healed the bitter strife
I sorely wept in life!

The conscious door opes noiselessly, and he
Who had few words of tenderness for me
Kneels at my side and cries: "Couldst thou but live!
Forgive, sweet wife, forgive!"

Yet I am calm, with calmness of the dead
Who, by the love of God, are comforted; –
My peace doth like a mighty river roll,
And rest unto my soul!

But hark! a voice – a cry, – so small, so faint!
My child! – In Paradise I hear thy plaint!
O God ! – Grant but me its steps to guide,
And I ask naught beside!

My Great-Great Uncle's Wife
Taken from *The Doric Reed* (1897)

Above a quaint old chimney-piece
A canvas glows with life, –
You almost look for smile and speech,
My great-great uncle's wife,

In lace fichu and feathered togue, –
        As masterpiece of West,
Who crowned his fame with this proud dame,
        The noble, fair Celeste!

Right loyal blood was hers, I trow,
        In time of peace or war,
Whose trusty swords were true to France
        And Henry of Navarre!
Whose hearts and hands n'er quailed nor felled
        When duty made her claim,
Nor feared a foe, the world could show, –
        Of nation or of name!

But doughty deeds and valiant hearts
        Were helpless to protect
In Terror's Reign, when every home
        Of France was held "suspect,"
Till fair Celeste, with woman's wit
        And will, contrived the plan
To cheat the ear of Robespierre,
        And all his murderous clan!

One misty morn at brink of day
        A team drove to the line;
The sentinel looked grim and called,
        "Good citizen, the sign!"
Quick came the magic talisman,
        "Ay, citizen, what freight?"
"The casks of beer bound for frontier."
        "Pass this team through the gate!"

In cargo, safe of friendly ship
        The casks of beer were stored, –
The most intoxicating beer
        That came aboard,
The Captain to the mate and crew,
        When on the deck appeared
A velvet cloak and feathered togue,
        And every sailor cheered!

Long reigned this maid and matron fair,
        Of hearts and homes the queen,
In land that owned no tyrant's rule,
        And feared no guillotine;
And great-grandsons the story tell

Of how she won the sign,
And made small beer of Robespierre,
The day she passed the line!

Beethoven
Taken from *The Doric Reed* (1897)

Sublimest Master, thou, of harmony,
From whose untroubled depths serenely flow
The sinuous streams of sweetest melody;
Now in exhaustless fullness dost thou know
The joy divine thy raptured strains foretold;
God's harmony thy prayer hath satisfied,
His music on thy listening ear hath rolled;
Accord unmarred, for which thy spirit sighed,
In its completeness, though the eternal years
Is thine; thy yearning soul its echo dim
Didst catch amid thy mortal woes and fears, –
An earnest of the blest, perpetual hymn,
And legacy to us, which shall inspire,
With something of thy pure, celestial fire.

Blue and the Gray
Taken from *The Doric Reed* (1897)

Very peacefully they rest, –
Who, in life by Peace unblest,
Caught the war-cry fierce and shrill,
Felt the battles shock and thrill,
Heard dreadful cannons roar, –
Death behind and death before, –
Fighting on sea and land,
Foot to foot and hand to hand!

Very peacefully they rest, –
North and South and East and West –
While the heaven-descending dew
Falls alike on Gray and Blue,
While the cheering light of day
Shines on Blue and Shines on Gray;
Weary march and battle sore
Past for them forevermore!

Very peacefully they rest, –

And the babes whose cheeks they pressed
In the last good-bye have stood
O'er their graves in proud manhood,
And the holy wedlock true
Plighted hearts of Gray and Blue;
In the light of hearthstone fires
Till the deeds of soldier-sires.

Miss Nancy's Gown
Taken from *The Doric Reed* (1897)

In days when George the Third was King
        And ruled the Old Dominion,
And Law and Fashion owned the sway
        Of Parliament's opinion,
A good ship brought across the sea
        A treasure fair and fine, –
Miss Nancy's gown from London town,
        The latest Court design!

The plaited waist from neck to belt
        Scarce measured half a span,
The sleeves, balloon-like, at the top
        Could hold her feather fan;
The narrow skirt with bias gore
        Revealed an ankle neat,
Whene'er she put her dainty foot
        From carriage-step to street!

By skilful hands this wondrous gown
        Of costliest stuff was made,
Cocoons of France on Antwerp looks
        Wrought to embossed brocade,
Where roses red and violets
        In blooming beauty grew,
As if young May were there always,
        And June and April too!

And from this bower of delight
        Miss Nancy reigned a Queen,
Nor one disloyal heart rebelled
        In all her wide demesne;
The noble House of Burgesses
        Forgot its fierce debate
O'er rights of Crown, when Nancy's gown

Appeared in Halls of State!

Through jocund reel, or measured tread
Of stately minuet,
Like fairy vision shone the bloom
Of rose and violet,
As hand in hand with Washington,
The hero of the day,
The smiling face and nymph-like grace
Of Nancy led the way!

A century since that gay time
The merry dance was trod,
Has passed, and Nancy long has slept
Beneath the churchyard sod;
Yet on the brocade velvet gown
The rose and violet
Are blooming bright as on the night
She danced the minuet!

Fishing and Wishing
Taken from *The Grasshoppers' Hop and Other Verses* (1901)

Three little folk by the meadow brook,
With a line of twine and bent pin hook,
And an eager, earnest, serious look,
As if they were conning a lesson book,
Sat resolutely fishing!

But either the fish were wondrous wise,
Or they had the sharpest kind of eyes,
For they wouldn't bite, to the great surprise
Of the little folk, who said, with sighs,
"Let's play the game of wishing!"

"I wish," said Tom, "for a pot of gold
With every minute that has been told
Since the day the earth was young or old;
I'd have more money than I could hold.
See, what I get by wishing!"

"I wish," said Ned, "that the ships at sea,
And all that is in them, belonged to me,
And all that have been, or ever will be;
My wish is the best, don't you agree?

And worth a day of fishing!"

"I wish," said Moll, with a toss of her head,
And a pout of her lips that were cherry red,
"You'd get your wishes, just as your said,
And give them to me, – now, Tom and Ned,
I've got the most by wishing!"

And all day long the woodland shade
The three little fisher folk sat and played,
And oh, the millions of money they made,
Through never a dollar of it was paid,
Was worth a year of fishing!

Where the Sandman Gets His Sand
Taken from *The Grasshoppers' Hop and Other Verses* (1901)

The Sandman, oh, the Sandman,
When he rides into the town,
Then all the little children
Drop their pretty eyelids down.
They know when he is coming
And his power cannot withstand,
But still they always wonder
Where the Sandman gets his sand!

He gallops through the country
And he gallops through the street,
But the busy little children
Never hear his horse's feet.
They never see him scatter
What he holds within his hand,
And that is why they wonder
Where the Sandman keeps his sand!

He rides o'er beds of poppies
And he rides o'er fields of hay;
And sure he gathers something
As he gallops on his way,
To lay upon the eyelids
Of the children in the land,
Who rub their eyes and wonder
How the Sandman gets his sand!

But early in the morning,

When they wake as fresh and new
As pretty little rosebuds,
With their faces washed in dew, –
Oh, then they are so thankful,
All the merry little band,
That, in the wide world, somehow,
The good Sandman finds his sand!

APPENDIX C

Copy of Alabama Legislative Resolution
taken from the Judson Alumnae Magazine, June 1922, page 26.

Alabama Honors Mobile Poet by Official Action

Legislature Adopts Resolution Expressing Appreciation of Work of Women

The attention which Miss Zitella Cocke, Alabama woman who has adopted Mobile as her home, is attracting to Alabama through her poems was recognized by the Alabama legislature yesterday. In a resolution passed by the house, the senate concurring, the legislators expressed appreciation for the work which the poet is doing. The passing of the resolution was a unique event in the legislature, and is the first time the state body ever recognized the work of any citizen of the state in this way.

The distinguished poet came to Mobile about a year ago to make her home. Since coming here, she was won renown by her poems, which are being read all over the world.

W.B. Alexander, representative from Perry County, the native county of Miss Zitella Cocke, introduced the resolution. D.B. Cobbs of Mobile, who is a personal friend of Miss Cocke, spoke feelingly of the esteem in which she is held by the people of Mobile, and of this section of the state. He told also of the attention she is attracting to the state by her poems. The resolution is as follows:

"Whereas, Miss Zitella Cocke, who was born and reared in the county of Perry, State of Alabama, a sister of Madison Cocke, member of the Fourth Alabama Regiment, killed at Gettysburg, and a sister of John Binion Cocke, a captain in the Confederate army, is now a resident of the city of Mobile; and,

"Whereas, she has materially contributed to the best literature of the world by the publication of many wonderful poems from her pen, all of which are of surpassing beauty and merit; and,

"Whereas, the literary beauty of the poems of Miss Cocke has not only been recognized in Alabama and throughout the South, but also by many of the prominent authors' clubs of America, of Great Britain and France; and,

"Whereas, she has rendered a vital service to the State in that she was taught in their early days, some of the men who have filled leading positions in these halls; and,

"Whereas after a long and useful life this gifted daughter of Alabama waits

> "To rise to the joy, high-priced,
> Won for us by our risen Christ."

"Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved by the House, the Senate concurring, that the Legislature of Alabama hereby express the appreciation of its members and of the people of the State of Alabama of the fame and renown which Miss Zitella Cocke has achieved for the State in the field of literature and music.

"Be It Further Resolved, That a copy of these resolutions be forwarded to Miss Zitella Cocke at Mobile, Alabama."

APPENDIX D
EXAMPLE OF ZITELLA COCKE'S PUBLISHED SHEET MUSIC.

The images are from the Library of Congress' Sheet Music Collection. The images can be found at the library's website at www.loc.gov.

10788 L
COPY DELIVERED TO THE
JUN 9 - 1900
Music Department

La Belle Sophie

Caprice for Piano

Dedicated to
Miss Sophie Tucker
of Norfolk, Va.

BY

ZITELLA COCKE.

Geo F Swain

PHILADELPHIA.
Published by LOUIS NEHER 1413 Chestnut St.

Copyright 1900 by Louis Neher.

Dedicated to Miss Sophie Tucker,

Of Norfolk, Virginia.

LA BELLE SOPHIE.

CAPRICE FOR PIANO.

by ZITELLA COCKE.

Moderato.

PIANO.

8va

Con espressione.

rall.

Copyrighted 1880 by Louis Neher.

rall:

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Vivace.
f

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Teneremente.

rall.
f

rall:

ff

con espressione.

rall:

molto rallentando.

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