

# Zephaniah Swift Spalding

## Constance Woolson's Cipher

—Cheryl B. Torsney

Speculation about Constance Woolson's lovers—their existence, their gender, how they are coded into her writing (or not)—has occasioned both scholarship and fiction. One of Woolson's earliest commentators, Rayburn Moore, continues to tantalize contemporary readers with his mention of Woolson's Army of the Republic soldier boyfriend, Zephaniah Swift Spalding (Fig. 1). In a number of her early Civil War poems and stories, I will argue, Woolson's affection for Zeph Spalding gets displaced onto the Confederate brigadier general John Hunt Morgan, the celebrity soldier with the name recognition of a pop idol. In this guise among others, Zeph haunts Woolson's writing throughout her career: in *Anne* (1880), Woolson's first novel, as Captain Ward Heathcote, and in *Horace Chase* (1894), Woolson's last novel, as the eponymous Yankee businessman. Throughout, Zeph functions as a cipher that reveals Woolson's understanding of the Civil War and its aftermath, the economic expansion that followed, and the imperialist zeitgeist of nineteenth-century America.<sup>1</sup>

Zephaniah Swift Spalding, son of the Honorable Rufus P. Spalding (1759–1823), was named after his father's mentor Zephaniah Swift, chief justice of Connecticut. Rufus Spalding served three years on Ohio's supreme court beginning in 1848. He and his family moved from Warren, Trumbull County, to Summit County, where he joined the Free Soil party and, as an outspoken critic of slavery, served as counsel for at least one fugitive slave. He was a delegate to the Republican National Convention that nominated Abraham Lincoln; following the Civil War, he represented Ohio's Eighteenth District in Congress, where he led debates on Reconstruction.

His son, Zephaniah or Zeph, was a bright young man. Born in Akron, he was two years older than Woolson. By 1860, the Spaldings lived in Cleveland's Fourth Ward and the Woolsons in Cleveland's Sixth Ward. The families vacationed together at Mackinac Island, where the young Connie and Zeph worked together on a newspaper distributed to their families. Given the small size of Cleveland in general and the political and business communities in particular during the 1850s, it would be no surprise that the teenaged Connie and Zeph were wrapped up in each other's lives.<sup>2</sup>



**Fig. 1, Zephaniah Swift Spalding in his twenties or thirties.**

*Photo courtesy of the Kauai Historical Society.*

Cut to 1861: Woolson was twenty-one years old; Zeph was twenty-three. Both were unmarried. Zeph enlisted in the Twenty-seventh Ohio Volunteer Infantry (Fuller's Brigade) on July 25, 1861. A member of Company G, he did well; his father wrote Ohio governor David Tod on July 17, 1862, to request that his son be given command of one of the new Ohio regiments. The Twenty-seventh OVI was organized at Camp Chase in Columbus, where Wilhelmina's lover Gustav from Woolson's early story "Wilhelmina" (1875) would be mustered in. The regiment was sent to Missouri but eventually participated in the siege of Corinth in 1862 and Grant's Mississippi Campaign thereafter, as well as the fall of Atlanta in 1864. Before mustering out at war's end, the Twenty-seventh OVI was headquartered in Louisville, the Kentucky home of General Morgan.

Very little is known directly about Woolson's wartime experience outside of the short discussion in Rayburn Moore's ever-valuable Twayne volume. Moore cites Woolson's description of the war's early days in *Anne* and her singing old Civil War tunes around a piano during her Cairo sojourn in 1890. In letter after letter, she lamented that the war had indelibly marked her generation. To her former Cleveland schoolmistress, Miss Linda Guilford, she waxed nostalgic, "I belong to the generations, you know, who felt those years [of the war] as I have felt nothing since." To the Southern poet Paul Hamilton Hayne, "It is in vain for our generation to hope to be any other than 'people who remember.' Sometimes even now, I wake early, and think I hear the distant call of the newsboy far down the street, 'Extra! Extra! All about the last battle!'"—And then how we rushed out to get it, how we devoured it, and then hurried down to the 'Soldier's Aid' rooms to do the little that was open to us faraway ones to

do,—prepare boxes of supplies for the soldiers.” To Hamilton Mabie, who served on the staff of the *Christian Union* and then as associate editor of *The Outlook*, she wrote from Venice on June 18, 1883: “I have a theory, too, that those of us who remember the war,—who were old enough to be stirred by it, yet, at the same time, young enough to have it the first great event of our lives,—we of that generation, are the most deeply-dyed ‘Americans’ that exist. We cannot help it. Our ‘country,’ and all that means,—patriotism in its warmest form, was burned into us by a red-hot fire, and the results are ineffaceable.”<sup>3</sup>

On December 10, 1893, just weeks before she died, Woolson told her nephew Samuel Mather,

I should like to see [Zeph] again. ... If I could get him alone, I dare say we should have a very friendly and funny talk. But, meanwhile, we should both be inwardly thinking “Great heavens—what an escape I had!” It was only the glamour of the war that brought us together. Every girl wanted to have a soldier-lover in those intense years, and every soldier (especially the volunteers) was wrought up to the highest point of excitement & romance.<sup>4</sup>

Romantic it was, at least at the beginning of the war. Connie, the confessed “redhot abolitionist,” would have seen Zeph, the Ohio volunteer, as Rufus P. Spalding’s son, fighting on the battlefield instead of in the courtroom for the freedom of the slaves.

At the same time, a separate albeit related narrative competed for Woolson’s attention and the attention of the country: the romance of Confederate brigadier general John Hunt Morgan, the Rebel Raider. Woolson’s local Cleveland papers and the national press were obsessed with General Morgan, both during and after the Civil War. And why not? A bad-boy celebrity of his day, he was handsome, rakish, bold, and dangerous: a cross between a pirate and one of Dumas’s musketeers, with piercing eyes, flowing hair, and a neatly trimmed goatee. He sported his signature hat folded up on one side (Fig. 2). The *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Woolson’s home-town paper, featured between one and three articles a day on him and his 2,460 men when he launched a raid into Kentucky, Indiana, and Ohio during July 1863; accounts told repeatedly of heroic local efforts to hide livestock from the raiders, as Morgan’s wiliness was widely touted. In 1862 C. D. Benson published music for the “Captain John Morgan Schottische,” with the subtitle “Now you’ve got him, / Now you hav’nt,” to commemorate Morgan’s escape from the Ohio State Penitentiary following his capture. Morgan was the hero of “The Kentucky Partisan” (1862), a bloody, passionate, nationalist poem by Paul Hamilton Hayne, Woolson’s postwar friend and correspondent, whose second stanza reads in part:



**Fig. 2, Brigadier General John Hunt Morgan, Rebel Raider.**  
*Photo courtesy of Special Collections, University of Kentucky Libraries.*

Well done, gallant Morgan!  
Strike with might and main,  
Till the fair fields redden  
With a gory rain;  
Smite them by the roadside,  
Smite them in the wood,  
By the lonely valley,  
And the purpling flood;

Given Woolson's frequent correspondence with Hayne over a short period in the mid-1870s, she must have known this poem and would have been as impressed as readers are today by its vivid, bellicose imagery.<sup>5</sup>

In fact, the number of references to Morgan in Woolson's writing betrays a fascination with his guts and gallantry. As Patti Capel Swartz has noted, Woolson builds her narratives around Morgan in "Told in a Farm-House" (1873), a long poem often referred to as "Kentucky Belle" in which an Ohio farm woman finds one of Morgan's raiders injured, takes him in, nurses him back to health, and sends him back to Morgan on her own horse, Kentucky Belle. Swartz notes as well that "Matches Morganatic" (1878), a short romance, is set in Ohio against the background of Morgan's Raid. Further examination of Woolson's *oeuvre* reveals that General John Hunt Morgan also looms in the short story "Crowder's Cove" (1876) and in the long poem *Two Women* (1877) subtitled "1862," both published in *Appletons' Journal*. Evidently the success of "Crowder's Cove" left the Appletons asking for more of the same from

Woolson, who may have returned, yet again, to the Morgan myth she had used in “Told in a Farm-House” only three and a half years earlier.<sup>6</sup>

In “Crowder’s Cove,” Sally, an orphan “fresh from boarding-school,” has been sent to the Tennessee mountains to board with John Crowder and his sister-in-law Elinor Kent, originally from New Hampshire (like the Woolson family). The young women couldn’t be more different: “one girl was rich, the other was poor; yet the rich girl’s possessions looked like rags, and tatters, and beggar’s gatherings, beside the neat belongings of the other” (357). Elinor develops a plan to aid the Union and to cross the Ohio River on a horse that she convinces her brother-in-law to purchase, a white mare named Bess. Sally is rather disengaged with the progress of the war, which disgusts Elinor. Partisans come to the farm twice: ununiformed Confederate sympathizers for horse feed and uniformed Union soldiers for livestock. Bushwhackers claiming to be neutrals come a third time and burn Crowder’s barns. At this point, the Crowders are forced to take in a wounded Southern soldier, Cameron Halisey, whom Sally nurses back to health. When Halisey receives intelligence about a surprise attack, both girls overhear and saddle horses to alert the troops: Elinor, the Union; and Sally, the Confederate.

Sally, the Southern girl who is the better rider with the stronger horse, wins the race, and Morgan’s troops capture the Yankee band. Sally is “the pride, and the belle, and the glory of Morgan’s men that night” (362). Because of her bravery, a Yankee general is captured. The denouement reveals that Elinor, like Woolson, worked in hospitals throughout the war and doesn’t marry, while Sally weds a well-to-do gentleman and gains a reputation for voluptuous beauty. Like Morgan and his men, Sally becomes the subject of narrative. Moreover, a conflation of the names of Sally’s and Elinor’s mounts—Black Tom and Bess—produces the name of Morgan’s famous horse, Black Bess.

In “Two Women,” Woolson reprises the premise of two very different women—a brunette and a blonde in the first, a country girl and a city lady in the second—in love with the same wounded volunteer. The narrative begins on a train with a meeting between the only two women aboard, among groups of soldiers. Unbeknown to them, both are traveling to see the same man. The backdrop is “The wild adventurous cavalry campaign / That Morgan and his men, bold riders all, / Kept up in fair Kentucky all those years” (61). The country girl is naïve and knows nothing of horses while the city lady is, like Morgan himself, a fair judge of racing flesh. As it turns out, the lover has been shot by John Morgan’s troops. When the lady discovers this, she champions Morgan and his riders:

... Morgan’s men  
Are bold Kentucky riders; every glen  
Knows their fleet midnight gallop. ... (63)

Morgan, then just a captain, makes an appearance at the end of the poem, when the soldier is buried. He and a band of men arrive graveside, dismount, honor the fallen, and then ride away.

... And one, a slave,  
Looks down the road and mutters: “That was him,  
Young Cap’en Morgan’s self! These eyes is dim,

But they knows Morgan! Morgan! — what! why, bless  
Your hearts, *I* know him, and I know Black Bess—  
'Twas Bess he rode.” (146)

Readers today will recognize this hushed awe as akin to the response of those left in the wake of a superhero.

Morgan and Spalding merge into a single romantic hero in Woolson's imagination regardless of the fact that one fought for the Confederacy and the other for the Union. Although the men did not resemble each other physically—Morgan was dark complexioned and compactly built, Spalding was blonde and husky—both adored horses. Morgan's horsemanship is well documented, and there is lingering evidence of Spalding's tastes as well. A letter in the Kauai Historical Society from Lydia Hoy, Spalding's great-granddaughter, reveals that Spalding also appreciated fine horses: “Col. Spalding was very interested in horse racing and he imported the ‘Norfolk Strait’ to Kauai from Calif. where he made the purchase from Gov. (then) Leland Stanford. He had a racetrack called Waipoli by the Wailua River.” The two men were further linked geographically. Spalding led the Twenty-seventh OVI; Morgan's northernmost foray was into Ohio. His famous blunder occurred at the Battle of Buffington Island (July 1863), which was fought over an Ohio River island between Marietta, Ohio, and Parkersburg, West Virginia. Current West Virginia would also provide Woolson's rugged landscape for Anne Douglas's nursing experience in *Anne*. Her patients are first from western (i.e., Ohio) regiments and then from New York regiments: Zeph actually served in both. Woolson's first novel casts Anne as a nurse first in Weston, now West Virginia, then further south in a field hospital, and finally in a private home near the Virginia border, where she tends to Captain Ward Heathcote, her fever-ridden lover. Both Zeph, Woolson's personal connection to the war, and Morgan, her fictionalized Zeph, were present in Mississippi on October 2 and 4, 1862, for the Battle of Corinth. Moreover, both men were imprisoned during the war; Morgan quickly escaped from the Ohio penitentiary, while Spalding was eventually released through an exchange for “a Southern prisoner who also had a distinguished father.”<sup>7</sup>

General John Hunt Morgan was betrayed and killed on September 2, 1864, at Greeneville, Tennessee, when the owner of his billet, Mrs. Williams, alerted Union soldiers. His death made the front page of the September 24, 1864, issue of *Harper's Weekly*. A longer piece in *Harper's Monthly*, John S. C. Abbott's “Heroic Deeds of Heroic Men: The Pursuit and Capture of Morgan,” detailed Morgan's final days. Well after the war, Morgan continued to enthrall. The *Ohio Farmer*, a Cleveland magazine that published reviews of Woolson's work, featured two articles about Morgan in a column for younger readers, “Talks with the Children: The Morgan Raid” and “An Incident of Morgan's Raid.” In January 1891, the *Century* printed a twenty-three-page piece entitled “A Romance of Morgan's Rough Riders: The Raid,” by Basil W. Duke, Morgan's brother-in-law. Woolson surely had access to all of these periodicals. John Hunt Morgan thus remained on the stage—and elided with Zeph in Woolson's mind—from the early days of the war to the last decade of the century.<sup>8</sup>

As for Zeph, he was discharged from the Twenty-seventh OVI in February 1864. For the next three years, until late 1867, there is no record of his whereabouts; however, because his



father Rufus was serving as a congressman at the time, the well-respected Colonel Spalding may have returned to his home in Cleveland and would have encountered young Constance Woolson, who had been following his Civil War exploits and writing poetry and sketches. In December 1867, no doubt as a result of his influential father's efforts in Washington, Zeph was called upon by Secretary of State William H. Seward to travel to Hawaii, serve as a "secret agent," and determine "what effect the reciprocity treaty would have on the future relations of the United States and Hawaii." In the guise of a cotton speculator, Zeph was to investigate the local sentiment regarding whether Congress should sign a trade agreement with Hawaii, a "reciprocity treaty," which would allow Hawaiian sugar to enter the United States duty-free in exchange for access to Pearl Harbor; or whether the United States should instead begin the process of annexing the Sandwich Islands.<sup>9</sup>

Seward did not believe that the American public was ready to entertain either a reciprocity agreement or annexation. As he wrote in a confidential communiqué to Spalding on July 5, 1868:

Without going into an explanation of the causes for the condition of national sentiment which temporarily exists, it is enough to say that the public attention sensibly continues to be fastened upon the domestic questions which have grown out of the late civil war. The public mind refuses to dismiss these questions even so far as to entertain the higher but more remote questions of national extension and aggrandizement. The periodical Presidential and Congressional elections are approaching. Each of the political parties seems to suppose that economy and retrenchment will be prevailing considerations in that election and the leaders of each party therefore seem to shrink from every suggestion which may involve any new national enterprise, and especially any foreign one. How long sentiments of this sort may control the proceedings of the Government is uncertain, but, in the meantime, it will be well for you not to allow extravagant expectations of sympathy between the United States and the friends of annexation in the islands to influence your own conduct.<sup>10</sup>

Two years after the war, as Seward saw it, the country was still focused on civil disruption. But as Zeph Spalding was beginning to discover, sugarcane was already developing in Hawaii as an international cash crop, the Hawaiian trade was in the ascendant and politically vexed, while new labor opportunities were opening for freedmen amid accusations that their treatment in the cane fields recalled their lives as slaves. Already in 1867, the United States was seeking a global economy in the Pacific.

To understand the implications for Spalding's future and Woolson's future writing, it is useful to understand something of the business of growing, harvesting, refining, and marketing sugar. As Francine du Plessix Gray explains, cane from which sugar is extracted had always grown wild in Hawaii but had not been exploited until after the disintegration of the Pacific whaling industry in the 1840s and 1850s, which impacted the economies of whaling nations from Norway to Russia. Hawaii needed another source of support for its economy, and sugar was another natural resource. By 1853, sugar was the chief export of the islands, with almost three thousand acres planted in cane. According to Gavan Daws's *Shoal of Time: A History of*

*the Hawaiian Islands*, “The Civil War ... made the Hawaiian sugar industry. Southern sugar disappeared from the market in the northern states of the Union, and prices climbed so high that planters in the islands could make good profits even after paying heavy tariffs at American ports of entry.” Daws goes on to note that thirty-two plantations and mill companies conducted business in Hawaii by 1866, twenty more than in 1860: “Fewer than a million and a half pounds of sugar were exported in 1860; in 1866 the figure was about seventeen and three-quarter million pounds.” In the South, sugar plantations had been destroyed or their production disrupted significantly by the Civil War and its outcome, so the country’s sweet tooth was fed by sugar from Hawaii, which arrived in large quantities through California ports. According to a report on “Domestic Sugar Production” in 1882, “the value of the sugar imported into the United States is greater than that of any other single article of commerce.” The report continues:

In the year 1880, statistics show that the astonishing quantity of over 1,829,000,000 pounds of sugar were imported into this country, at a cost of nearly \$120,000, 000. The average yearly consumption *per capita* during the decade from 1860 to 1879 was about 28 pounds; but in the ten years following it had risen to 38 pounds, an increase of about 35 per cent in ten years, and is steadily on the increase.

Thus, Hawaii’s sugar economy played a significant role in America’s balance of trade and international clout, while Manifest Destiny cast the Monroe Doctrine to the wind.<sup>11</sup>

As a postwar spy charged with discovering local Hawaiian sentiment about a reciprocity treaty to allow Hawaiian sugar to enter American ports duty-free in exchange for the land on which to construct the Pearl Harbor naval base, Spalding reported his findings secretly to Secretary of State Seward in monthly letters to his father, Congressman Spalding. By 1868, Zeph had been revealed as a spy in part as a result of his friendship with rabid pro-annexationist Captain William Reynolds of the American man-of-war *Lackawanna*, which was anchored in a Honolulu harbor. He was recalled to Washington but returned to Honolulu almost immediately to assume positions as the acting United States vice consul and then the U.S. consul until fall 1869. By 1870, Spalding was ready to enter the sugar industry himself; given his experience and connections, he understood how easily he could make his fortune, and he joined a group of investors with plans to develop the sugar industry on the island of Maui.<sup>12</sup>

Like Morgan on the banks of the Ohio River, Spalding had a plan. He came to know the storied Captain James Makee, who as master of a whaling ship had been attacked with a cleaver by his ship’s cook en route from Lahaina, Maui, to Honolulu in 1843. Makee became a well-known businessman in Maui with a number of interests, including Torbert’s Plantation at Ulupalakua, Maui, where he raised cattle, grew sugarcane, milled sugar, and entertained the Hawaiian monarchy on his extensive property. In the *San Francisco Daily Morning Call* for July 30, 1864, Samuel Clemens (later to become Mark Twain) discussed Makee’s contribution of a hundred barrels of molasses from his Hawaiian plantation to benefit the Sanitary Fund. Clemens reported:

He has seven hundred acres of cane growing, and this area will be increased during the



next few months to nine hundred or a thousand acres. ... [S]o rich is the land that six tons of sugar have been made on a single acre, and the average is about three tons. ... Its product will probably realize, at present rates, this year, over one hundred thousand dollars.<sup>13</sup>

Makee's investment history and what Clemens noted as "great triumphs of Yankee genius" became a model for Zeph, who himself made a significant investment on July 18, 1871, by marrying Wilhelmina Harris Makee, the captain's eldest daughter, with whom he would have five children.<sup>14</sup> Three years later, William G. Irwin joined Spalding, J. S. Walker, and others in a sugar agency and commission business operating as William G. Irwin and Co. In 1876, Spalding and Makee purchased a cattle ranch with plans to turn it over to sugarcane; a year later the MaKee Sugar Company was chartered at Kapaa. In 1879, Makee died and left his sugar interests on Kauai to Spalding. Zeph now controlled not only his father-in-law's property but also his own Kealia Plantation in which the Hawaiian king Kalaukua had a 25 percent interest. The properties operated as the Makee Sugar Company with all processing done at Spalding's Kealia Mill. In 1888, Spalding made news with his introduction of the diffusion process, which arguably resulted in less waste than milling and thus was state-of-the-art. As a result of his connections, projections, and inventions, Spalding had become a very wealthy man indeed.<sup>15</sup>

He had become celebrated not only in his home country and territories but also abroad. In 1889, Spalding received the Order of the French Legion of Honor and served as the Hawaiian representative at the Exposition Universelle. He lived in Paris for a number of years to provide his children with a European education and to provide Wilhelmina, "an accomplished musician" who had suffered a debilitating stroke, with access to "concerts, opera, and other musical events." Given the size of the American expatriate community in Europe—and Woolson's acquaintance with Henry James as well as William Dean Howells, another Ohioan from the northeast part of the state—it is easy to imagine that Woolson and Spalding may even have seen each other during their expatriate years.<sup>16</sup>

Woolson would have been privy to news about Zeph's success—if not from Zeph himself then certainly from other expatriates and relations still in Cleveland, like her nephew Samuel Mather. Because her story "Miss Grief" appeared in *Lippincott's* for May 1880, she may well have read "My Journey with a King" by Louise Coffin Jones in *Lippincott's* for October 1881. Jones mentions a visit to the Makee plantation, which Zeph now owned following his father-in-law's death. Moreover, Constance would have been reminded of Zeph frequently upon reading *Harper's Monthly*. A cursory glance at issues from February 1855 to October 1893 reveals no fewer than fifteen articles devoted at least in part to the Hawaiian Islands, including pieces on volcanoes, horse-taming, diplomatic service, sugar growing, and the Hawaiian monarchy, as well as a long article in October 1893 by Carl Schurz on Manifest Destiny, William Seward, and territorial expansion. Surely these articles, with their Spaldingesque subtext, would have touched Woolson personally.

In 1882, Zeph himself penned a defense of the Reciprocity Treaty that had made him a rich man. His observations were published by the *Cleveland Leader*. Although Constance was

already living abroad, someone may well have forwarded Zeph's treatise, which rebutted an article published by the *San Francisco Chronicle* on the topic of a *Leader* story about Hawaiian sugar production and labor practices in Hawaii. The *Chronicle* had called the sugar industry "the worst system of slavery ever known," and Spalding took affront. Further, he declared that the Reciprocity Treaty had not made sugar more expensive as a result of the production falling into the hands of a monopoly headquartered in the United States. He retorted, "I am one of many Americans engaged in the production and manufacture of sugar at the Hawaiian Islands, and flatter myself that I am well enough known to many of your readers to have my word taken as truth, in preference to the sweeping assertions of a newspaper whose career has been marked by demagoguism, slander and blackmail."<sup>17</sup> Most of the letter, however, deals with the *Chronicle's* charge that the planters of Hawaii were employing a labor system "'of the most abject slavery'" (7). He went on, "I am happy to assure you, on the contrary ... that I am to-day as firm an abolitionist as when I gave my sanction and adherence to the emancipation proclamation of Father Abraham!" (7). Spalding explained that Hawaiian landowners contracted with laborers, and he included in an appendix the contract itself. Further, he discussed the need for American financial support through the Reciprocity Treaty because laborers were difficult to keep and even more difficult to replace: "[T]he number of available laborers in the country has never been in excess," Spalding wrote, "nor even equal to the wants and demands of the various industries pursued" (9–10).

The *Chronicle* had charged that the sugar magnates "'buy up' the poor, ignorant natives of the Southern Islands, and even inveigle the innocent and unsuspecting Norwegians from their fatherland to work out their lives under a burning sun upon our desert plains!" (10). Spalding responded that his climate was mild, and his laborers were able to save because there was "little call for spending money" (10). He concluded by begging the question: "How many Norwegians or Portuguese could do it in their own over-crowded and time-worn lands?" (10). Both the defensive tone of the open letter and Zeph's overstatement about living conditions in Norway suggest that he was protesting too much.

With its charges and countercharges regarding contract labor and cultural conflict, Zeph's history in Hawaii has all of the makings of Woolson's fiction, especially to readers familiar with her Civil War stories and novels. While several of her earliest stories, like "Old Gardiston" (1876), "In the Cotton Country" (1876), "Rodman the Keeper" (1877), "King David" (1878), and "Bro" (1878), touch the plight of the former slaves and interrogate racism, sectionalism, and freedom in complex ways, none deals specifically with Hawaii and the planters' difficulty in finding laborers for the cane fields. Nonetheless, Zeph's protestations in his letter to the *Leader* can be read as a response not only to the *Chronicle* but also to Woolson's stories, where the former slave workforce is not what the Woolson characters had hoped. King David cannot teach his freedmen pupils and returns to his New Hampshire school. At about the same time, the native Hawaiians who worked as cowboys, the Japanese who worked in island homes, and the Filipinos who worked the fields—in other words, those who supplied the uneducated labor for the island workforce—were thought to be "lazy, not good workers."<sup>18</sup> Such paternal perceptions bespeak the plantation's familiar social economy, which persisted in Hawaii for some time. Like many of his class in the antebellum South, Zeph's grandson Rufus had a local wet nurse, though he was born in Hawaii after the twentieth century

began. While it is important to recognize that island laborers had contracts, the Hawaiian economy was firmly modeled on the role of a black workforce in the nineteenth-century South.

Strikingly, some of the most recent scholarship on the Civil War situates that conflict in a global context. Gerald Horne's *The White Pacific: Imperialism and Black Slavery in the South Seas after the Civil War* demonstrates that American blacks found a kind of open society in nineteenth-century Hawaii and could be mistaken for ethnic Hawaiians.<sup>19</sup> Following the Civil War, sugar plantation owners encouraged freed slaves to emigrate and sign labor contracts, while prominent American blacks like Frederick Douglass disapproved of the "unwarranted intermeddling of Americans in Hawaiian affairs" (130). Still, the conflation of black labor in the American South and contract labor in Hawaii was exemplified when Mark Twain called indigenous Hawaiians "niggers" in his journals (139). The Lihue plantation that eventually encompassed Zeph Spalding's properties actually hired former slaves from the American South but later determined that they were "unreliable and indolent," the same conclusion drawn by Hawaiian Sugar Company agents who believed that Negroes were "no good whatever on Hawaiian plantations" (140). Thus, thinking about Zeph and the turns his life had taken, particularly his life in Hawaii, must have further complicated Woolson's responses to postwar race relations and the possibilities for reconciliation and a lasting peace.

In Woolson's last novel, *Horace Chase* (1894), published the year she died, Zephaniah Swift Spalding makes a final appearance. In the guise of capitalist hero, Woolson offered one last look at the successful industrialist and at herself as she felt her career coming to an end. In a letter to nephew Sam Mather, dated January 9, 1893, she discussed her last fictional creation and how he had been inspired:

Horace Chase ... has a dozen other interests besides this steamboat firm. At the time of this conversation (1874), he is about embarking in a new business in California, — "a big thing." — If I could have got at you, I should have taken your advice, & then said more clearly what the big thing was. As it is, it is left in the dark. The only big California business I know anything about, is sugar, & it is more connected with the Sandwich Islands, after all, than California, — though I believe Claus Spreckels is a Californian, is'nt he. But I thought Col. Spaulding [*sic*] would be too much amused by my making use of sugar, —! Which is the business in which he has made all his money.<sup>20</sup>

Clearly, Woolson had the stocky, blond Zeph in mind. Clearly, too, she had a sense that he was following her work.

The enduring role Zephaniah Spalding played in Constance Woolson's life and work—and Woolson's sense that *Horace Chase* would be her last novel—reveals the narrative as a *roman à clef* with an autobiographical subtext. Woolson, whose letters reveal a compulsive attention to her weight, might herself be cast as Ruth Franklin, whose older sister remarks that Ruth is "a whalelike creature."<sup>21</sup> Woolson's description of Ruth is close to a youthful self-portrait: "The girl had a dark complexion with a rich color, and hair that was almost black; her face was lighted by blue eyes, with long thick black lashes which made a dark fringe around the blue" (3). The text positions Ruth and Miss Billy as diametrically opposed personalities—Ruth abhors knick-knacks while Wilhelmina worships them (14)—and as competitors for Chase's

affections. If Ruth bears a close resemblance to Woolson, Miss Billy (a.k.a. Wilhelmina) recalls Wilhelmina Makee Spalding (Fig. 3). Moreover, the novel's Ruth owns a dog named Petit Trone, Esq., the very name of Woolson's pet in Gertrude Van Rensselaer Wickham's "Dogs of Noted Americans" (Fig. 4) and the name of the little dog that appears in *The Old Stone House* (1873), Woolson's early novel.<sup>22</sup>

Most significant, Horace Chase stands in for Zeph. Both have California connections. Chase is a rich industrialist who has made his fortune in railroads and baking powder. Like the real Zeph—and John Hunt Morgan—he loves and keeps horses. Like Zeph, he is also linked to roses: in the first pages of Woolson's novel, he sends an extravagant bouquet of hot-house roses to Ruth (32), just when the Makee Plantation was becoming known as Rose Ranch for the roses first brought to Maui by Zeph Spalding's mother-in-law. While sugar was the source of Zeph's fortune, according to his obituary in the *Pasadena Star-News*, he shared Chase's "business investments in various parts of the United States and Canada." Although it is not clear whether Zeph invested in railroads like Chase, he did arrange to have both his sugarcane and his paralyzed wife transported around the plantation on a flatcar, which rode on portable rails. The inside joke undoubtedly escaped her editors and readers, but Woolson must have been amused by her own pun when Chase remarks "'I'm only a civilian myself,' in a *pacific* voice" (112, my emphasis). A lover of animals, flowers, and music, Chase is a pacifist, a "civilian" with whom the reader is to sympathize. Through Chase, Woolson presents Zeph as a complex soul who has moved beyond his Civil War identity and his resemblance to Rebel Raider John Hunt Morgan to become a real estate developer destined to link the North and the South. As Chase reasons about turning Asheville, North Carolina, into a summer resort, "[I]t isn't only the Southerners who will come here. ... Northerners will flock also, when they understand what these mountains are" (29). Is it possible to imagine a more prescient statement about both North Carolina and Hawaii in the twenty-first century?<sup>23</sup>



**Fig. 3, Spalding Family at Valley House.**

Wilhelmina Makee Spalding, with her hair tightly knotted, is seated at center. Zephaniah stands in profile at left. *Photo courtesy of the Kauai Museum.*



**Fig. 4, “Pete Trone, Esq.,” Miss Constance Fenimore Woolson’s Dog.**

Gertrude Van R. Wickham, “Dogs of Noted Americans, Part I.” *St. Nicholas* (June 1888): 599.

One of the most provocative subplots in *Horace Chase* involves Ruth’s brother Jared, who



is “tall and broad-shouldered, with dark eyes whose expression was always sad” (95). His glory days have been his international travel while serving in the navy, and he has not been happy since. Horace Chase hires Jared to direct the Charleston office of the Columbian shipping line at a salary of \$3,000 a year. Jared is unsuccessful, however, and when Chase visits him in Charleston, Ruth’s brother is “wasted. His eyes had always been sad; but now they were deeply sunken, with dark hollows under them and over them” (267). Chase devises a story about needing an “experienced officer” to take over commanding one of his steamers from San Francisco to the Sandwich Islands; there is a quiet suggestion that Jared is suffering from a fever, which leads to raving and a near suicide. But readers familiar with the Woolson family history of depression may read Jared as Charlie, Woolson’s ne’er-do-well brother who was removed from his position as executor of Charles Jarvis Woolson’s estate and died in California.<sup>24</sup> No public records reveal what happened to Woolson’s only brother—and her mother’s favorite child—but Zeph may have offered Charlie work through one of his California interests.

*Horace Chase* is the culmination of Constance Woolson’s lifelong connection with Zephaniah Spalding, and he reprises Spalding’s early conflation in Woolson’s work with John Hunt Morgan as well. By the end of the novel, Chase has given his prize mare to his wife, Ruth Franklin, who rides *Kentucky Belle* to her tryst with Walter Willoughby. Years before, Woolson had invoked the same horse in her early poem “Told in a Farm-House” (1873), where Morgan’s soldier is returned to his brigade on another *Kentucky Belle*. In this way, Woolson’s *oeuvre* comes full circle, with the horse and Morgan/Spalding appearing once again as icons of romantic daring.

In Woolson’s last work, however, Horace Chase as a latter-day Zeph Spalding has outgrown the flamboyance of John Hunt Morgan. Like Zeph, Chase is a New World postwar industrialist. Having matured beyond the sectional arguments that brought national disruption, he yearns to unite the North and the South with the West on a pacific road to economic prosperity. His creative sensibilities promise a future secured by invention and the sort of imagination on display at Chicago’s Columbian Exposition in 1893, the year before Woolson’s death and the publication of *Horace Chase*. In fact, if there is a Morgan whom Zephaniah Swift Spalding resembles in the 1890s, it is industrialist John Pierpont Morgan, who had connections with Woolson’s nephew Samuel Mather.<sup>25</sup>

Since the beginning of the renaissance of Woolson studies in the mid-1980s, Constance Fenimore Woolson has been seen as a quiet innovator. Recent scholarship has noted that Woolson pioneered realism when other women were still writing sentimental novels. Upending novelistic conventions that required heroines to marry happily, her women characters did not. In Woolson’s fiction, the Civil War does not result in regional reconciliation; instead, like Woolson herself, her characters retreat to Europe and older sin, deeper suffering, and suffocation.

Woolson, however, proved even more revolutionary, more political, than scholars have thus far revealed. From the beginning of her career to its sudden end, her references to her childhood friend Zephaniah Swift Spalding place her on a global stage that stretched across the Pacific as well as across the Atlantic. She followed Zeph’s life in Hawaii, America, and Italy:

in “A Pink Villa” (1888), an American family eager to marry their daughters to titled Europeans encounters an American who, like Spalding himself, was educated at a small Methodist college and plans with his partner to clear a “large farm” and “put it all in sugar.” Woolson obviously knew about Zeph’s marriage and his growing wealth. Into the 1890s, her childhood sweetheart continued to appear in her fiction. His role need no longer be covert. In 2007, Victoria Brehm observed, “I now believe that Constance Fenimore Woolson created her stories with a subtext from the beginning of her career, that she wrote very, very few stories that didn’t have a political agenda. My guess is that she learned to do this from reading Melville.”<sup>26</sup> In the 1870s, when Woolson’s work began to appear in print, she knew that Melville had earned international fame as the author of *Typee* (1846), a novel of the Sandwich Islands. Like Melville, Woolson understood the country’s interest in Hawaii. Through her lifelong relationship with Zephaniah Swift Spalding, she also understood, even before Hawaii’s annexation in 1898, that the western territory was connected to the reemerging nation; and that the Civil War, ironically fought over transatlantically transported slaves, would have reverberations in the Pacific. Spalding, the blond counterpart to the dark John Hunt Morgan, evolves in Woolson’s work from Civil War soldier to Gilded-Age industrialist and thereby illuminates the whole of Woolson’s work, an intricate political and economic assembly of bodies, feelings, and history, of global supply and demand.

## Notes

I would like to acknowledge the research assistance of Dr. Jessika Thomas, West Virginia University; Rhea Palma, Kauai Historical Society; and Chris Faye, Kauai Museum; and the editing assistance of Emily Smead.

1. For tempting speculation about Woolson’s amours, see, for example, my *Constance Fenimore Woolson: The Grief of Artistry* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989); Kristin Comment, “The Lesbian ‘Impossibilities’ of Miss Grief’s ‘Armor,’” in *Constance Fenimore Woolson’s Nineteenth Century: Essays*, ed. Victoria Brehm (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001), 207–23; and Colm Tóibín, *The Master* (New York: Scribner, 2004). For mention of Spalding, see Rayburn Moore, *Constance Fenimore Woolson* (New York: Twayne, 1962), 23. As to Spalding’s recurring appearances, Victoria Brehm has discovered a number of blond Zeph-like figures in some of Woolson’s earliest work, including Hugh in *The Old Stone House* (1873), Max Ruger in “Flower in the Snow” (1874), and Rast Pronando in *Anne* (1882).

2. Sandol Stoddard’s biography of Zephaniah Spalding explains that Spalding did not get along with his stepmother and so left home at an early age. He attended Ohio Wesleyan College for a time, moved to New York in 1858 to work as a clerk, and joined New York’s Seventh National Guard unit as a private to meet influential people who might assist him in finding a job. With the outbreak of the Civil War, he returned to Ohio, where he enlisted in the Twenty-seventh OVI as a second lieutenant on his way to becoming a major. See “Biography of Col. Spaulding [sic].” Unpublished ms, n.p., October 31, 1991, Kauai Historical Society, Lihue, Hawaii. For the newspaper at Mackinac, see Moore, *Constance Fenimore Woolson*, 23.

3. For Woolson’s pastimes in Cairo, see Moore, *Constance Fenimore Woolson*, 22–23; for her letter to Guilford, see Moore, *Constance Fenimore Woolson*, 23. Permission is granted by Duke University for use of Woolson’s letters to Paul H. Hayne, July 23, 1875, and to Hamilton Mabie, June 18, 1883.

4. Moore, *Constance Fenimore Woolson*, 23.

5. For Benson’s “Schottish,” see *Historical American Sheet Music*, <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/sheetmusic/conf/conf01/conf0126/> (accessed January 2, 2007). For Hayne’s poem, see the *Southern Literary Messenger* (April 1862): 229; reprinted in *Anecdotes, Poetry and Incidents of the War: North and South 1860–1865*, ed. Frank Moore (New York: Printed for the subscribers, 1866), 403.

6. For Swartz’s observation, see “The Complex Loyalties of War: Constance Fenimore Woolson’s ‘Matches Morganatic’ and ‘Kentucky Belle.’” Unpublished ms. For “Kentucky Belle,” see “Kentucky Belle (Told in a Farm-House, 1868),” *Appletons’ Journal* (September 6, 1873): 289–90; for “Matches Morganatic,” see *Harper’s Monthly* (March 1878): 517–31. For “Crowder’s Cove,” see *Appletons’ Journal* (March 18, 1876): 357–62; and for *Two Women, 1862*, see *Appletons’ Journal* (January 1, 1877): 60–67, and (February 2, 1877): 140–47. Further references will be to these editions and will be made parenthetically in the text.

7. Hoy’s observation may be found in Lydia Hoy, Letter to Mr. Arruda, February 3, 1970, Kauai Historical Society, Lihue,

Hawaii. For Spalding's release, see Stoddard, "Biography of Col. Spaulding [sic]," n.p.

8. For Abbott's "Heroic Deeds of Heroic Men," see *Harper's Monthly* (August 1865): 287–97. For "Talks with Children: The Morgan Raid," see *Ohio Farmer* (May 31, 1879): 347; for "An Incident of Morgan's Raid," see *Ohio Farmer* (July 18, 1885): 43. Duke's narrative appears in the *Century* (January 1891): 403–12. This is the first of three accounts in the same issue. See also Orlando B. Willcox's "II: The Capture," 412–17; and Thomas H. Hines's "III: The Escape," 417–25.

9. For Spalding's charge from Seward, see Sylvester K. Stevens, *American Expansion in Hawaii: 1842–1898* (Harrisburg: Archives Publishing Co. of Pennsylvania, 1945), 106. Further information on the Reciprocity Treaty and the fate of the Sandwich Islands appears in Ruth Tabrah, *Hawaii: A Bicentennial History* (New York: Norton, 1980), 82. A reciprocity treaty had been approved by the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs in 1855 but was then defeated by the Senate. In 1864, the idea of such a treaty was resurrected without consequence, given the attention and funding to the war effort that Edmund Janes Carpenter has noted. See *America in Hawaii: A History of United States Influence in the Hawaiian Islands* (Boston: Small, Maynard & Co., 1899), 41. In 1867, the treaty was revived but failed again to be ratified in the Senate, although the Hawaiian government approved it on July 30.

10. Appendix 2, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1894: Affairs in Hawaii* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office 1895), 144.

11. Gray's description of the sugarcane industry appears in *Hawaii: The Sugar-Coated Fortress* (New York: Random House, 1972), 50. For the sudden growth in acres planted, see Carpenter, *America in Hawaii*, 30. Daws's observations may be found in *Shoal of Time: A History of the Hawaiian Islands* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 174–75, observations that are usefully augmented by data from "Domestic Sugar Production," *Manufacturer and Builder* (January 1882): 17.

12. For the conclusion of Spalding's covert activities and the beginning of his career as a sugar planter, see Daws, 187–88. For his investment in Maui's sugar industry, see A. Grove Day, *History Makers of Hawaii* (Honolulu: Mutual Publishing of Honolulu, 1984), 116. Day also profiles the career of Captain James Makee, 93.

13. See the *San Francisco Daily Morning Call*, July 30, 1864, <http://www.twainquotes.com/18640730d.html> (accessed June 7, 2007).

14. An early Woolson story entitled "Wilhelmina" appeared in 1875. "Wilhelmina" was not a familiar name of the age, with 487 names per one million births. Compare this to 35,350 instances of Jennifer per one million births in the early 1970s via <http://www.thenamemachine.com/baby-names-girls/Wilhelmina.html>. Given that the top girls' names of 1850 were Anna, Emma, Elizabeth, Minnie, Margaret, Ida, Alice, Bertha, and Sarah, Woolson's use of the unusual Wilhelmina suggests that she knew the name of Zeph Spalding's bride. See <http://www.ssa.gov/cgi-bin/popularnames.cgi>.

Wilhelmina is a name Woolson would return to repeatedly. In "Cicely's Christmas," a Wilhelmina Van Airytop gains the affections of a rich and charming gentleman; in *Horace Chase*, Miss Billy's real name is "Wilhelmina."

It is also worth noting that Samuel Clemens spent time during 1866 with Captain Makee at his thousand-acre Rose Ranch. Clemens noted "two pretty & accomplished girl's [sic] in the family & the plantation yields an income of \$60,000 a year—chance for some enterprising scrub." See his letter to Jane Lampton Clemens and Pamela A. Moffett, May 4, 1866, Mark Twain Project, [www.marktwainproject.org/xtf/view?docId=letters/UCCL00099.xml](http://www.marktwainproject.org/xtf/view?docId=letters/UCCL00099.xml). Zephaniah Spalding turned out to be that "enterprising scrub," marrying the musical—and rich—Wilhelmina.

15. William G. Irwin and Co. is documented in Jacob Adler, *Claus Spreckels: The Sugar King in Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1966), 87. For the emergence of the Makee Sugar Company, see Lihue Plantation Company History, *Hawaii Sugar Planters' Association Plantation Archives*, ed. Deborah Saito and Susan Campbell, UHM Library Hawaiian Collection, [http://www2hawaii.edu/~speccoll/p\\_lihue.html](http://www2hawaii.edu/~speccoll/p_lihue.html) (accessed January 23, 2008). H. P. Baldwin describes Spalding's diffusion process in "The Sugar Industry in the Hawaiian Islands," *Overland Monthly* (June 1895): 666.

16. For the Spalding family's residence in Paris, see Lydia Hoy, Letter to Mr. Arruda, February 3, 1970, Kauai Historical Society, Lihue, Hawaii. It is also of interest that Woolson and Spalding shared a silverware fetish. Although she could barely afford it, Woolson insisted upon purchasing Christofle flatware when she set up her Venice apartment. According to Sandol Stoddard, one of Zeph's European purchases was five complete sets of family silver in a pattern reserved for English nobility. Zeph had assured the silversmith that he would not be using the silver in England and so convinced the craftsman to fill his order ("Biography of Col. Spaulding [sic]," n.p.).

17. Zephaniah Swift Spalding, *Letter from Col. Zeph. Swift Spalding to the Cleveland Leader upon the reciprocity treaty with the Hawaiian government. Dated at Honolulu, November 30, 1881* (Cleveland: Leader Printing Co., 1882), 5–6. Subsequent references will be made parenthetically in the text.

18. Stoddard, "Biography of Col. Spaulding [sic]," n.p.

19. Gerald Horne, *The White Pacific: Imperialism and Black Slavery in the South Seas after the Civil War* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), 130–40.

20. Letter to Samuel Mather, January 9, 1893, Mather Family Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.

21. Constance Fenimore Woolson, *Horace Chase* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1894), 2. Subsequent references will be made parenthetically in the text.

22. Woolson published *The Old Stone House* under the pseudonym Anne March (Boston: D. Lothrop, 1873). Gertrude Van

R. Wickham's "Dogs of Noted Americans, Part I" appeared in *St. Nicholas* (May 1889): 595–600. Van Wickham refers to Woolson's terrier as Peter Trone, Esq. In a letter to magazine editor Mary Mapes Dodge, Woolson wrote, "Pete Trone's name was never Peter; do correct it won't you?" Woolson's descendant, Gary Woolson, has privately printed a charming chapbook excerpting Van Wickham's paragraphs about Pete Trone, Esq.

23. Rose Ranch is described by Stoddard, "Biography of Col. Spaulding [*sic*]," n.p., where the plantation's flatcar is also noted. For the scope of Zeph's investments, see "Death Calls Prominent American," *Pasadena Star-News*, June 20, 1927, 1. An air of nostalgia surrounds Horace Chase's appearance in Buncombe County, yet another facet of the complex character he shares with Zeph Spalding. Not only are the black retainers featured but also Chase's presence is noted by the locals: "Chase, did you say the name was? That's a hoax. It's General Grant himself, I reckon, coming along yere like a conqueror in disguise" (93). Interestingly, Zeph once had a Confederate flag that he had captured framed and hung at Valley House according to Chris Faye at the Kauai Museum. E-mail correspondence with the author, March 8, 2008.

24. Recently discovered texts at the Western Reserve Historical Society detail how Charlie was removed from his position as executor of his father's estate.

25. Because the Mathers were known as the first family of the Great Lakes iron-ore trade and J. P. Morgan owned U.S. Steel, it is not surprising that Woolson's nephew Samuel Mather and J. P. Morgan shared business and social circles. Among the instances reported, all following Woolson's death, are the following: on February 27, 1902, they dined together to welcome Prince Henry of Prussia; they also worked together to fund life insurance for Episcopal clergy, as reported in the *New York Times*, June 3, 1922, 9.

26. Victoria Brehm, personal correspondence, January 5, 2007.