

How the american spirit prevailed during the civil war

[War](#), [Civil War](#)



American spirit can be shown and demonstrated in many different ways. American's come from many different walks of life and backgrounds, but each person can show traits of a unique American. Within the novel, "At Fault" by Kate Chopin, one specific character stands out as the perfect example of this uniquely American individual.

During the time of the Civil War, and the rebuilding afterwards, many individuals had to learn to make their lives over again. This was especially true of those individuals that lived and called the southern states home. Chopin writes this story based off of a plantation located in the New Orleans area of Louisiana. The story shows the rebuilding of the country following the war, as well as the beginning stages of the new and upcoming railroad system that was to be built all over the country. These were just a few things that Terese' Lafirme had to encounter following the death of her husband Jerome.

Terese' Lafirme demonstrates true Americanism in more way than one. In the months following her husband's death, Terese' had to learn to be independent to live without him, and become well versed in entrepreneurship. Amongst these two things, Terese' also had to deal with the changing of the country and the rebuilding following the completion of the Civil War. She lived in an area that was damaged severely by the war, and working through this was the way to keep her business up and running. Terese' and her late husband had the farm to run and it came to the point where it was in her hands alone.

Chopin begins writing with the illustration of the Place-de-Bois, the Lafirme farm located in Louisiana. The death of Terese' husband, Jerome leads the neighbors to inquire as to what will come of the farm. " When Jerome Lafirme died, his neighbors awaited the results of his sudden taking off with indolent watchfulness. It was a matter of unusual interest to them that a plantation of four thousand acres had been left unincumbered to the disposal of a handsome, inconsolable, childless Creole widow of thirty" (Chopin, 1). At the time the story was published, 1890, it was a hard time for women to be independent. This was amidst the period that women were fighting for their rights to equality with men. However, there were some women that stood above them all and fought for their rights. Whether they were writing and speaking about their rights, or assuming the masculinity of taking over the farm after the passing of their husbands, these women proved that it could be done in these times.

The masculinity rule was exactly what Terese' assumed. Her husband left her with the farm, and she stepped up to the plate and took on the challenge of running it to the best of her abilities. This type of behavior proved a lot during these times. As previously stated, women were fighting for their rights at this time. Terese', even if it went unnoticed, showed that women can do just as well as man when it comes to being independent and running a farm on their own.

Moving into a second feature that demonstrates how Terese' showed her Americanism is her sense of entrepreneurship. At the time that Chopin wrote the story, the America's were rebuilding the country following the Civil War. "

She had made putting resistance to this change at first, opposing it step by step with a conservatism that yielded only to the resistless. She pictured a visionary troop of evils coming in the wake of the railroad, which, in her eyes no conceivable benefits could mitigate. The occasional tramp, she foresaw as an army; and the travelers whom chance deposited at the store that adjoined the station, she dreaded as an endless procession of intruders forcing themselves upon her privacy" (Chopin, 2). This was referencing to the railroads that were being constructed just outside of the Lafirme farm during this time. The country was rebuilding and improving, and living in such a high traffic area of Louisiana, Terese' had to learn to run her business around the building of the railroad.

The plantation was a large area that Terese' had to take care of and ensure was being run properly. The plantation was four thousand acres. When Terese' took running the plantation, she had the workers that her husband and her were left with prior to his passing. However, shortly after he passed away, another man came into the story to help her with keeping her farm in check. This was David. David was a man that worked as a mill worker. David had previously made a deal with Terese' late husband, Jerome, to work on their property. Following the death of Jerome, David met with Terese' to begin working on the farm.

The relationship between Terese' running the farm and David being in some sense an employee on the plantation began to grow in to more than just work relationship. This leads into another sense of unique Americanism is the budding love between Terese' and David. During the time that the story was

wrote, divorce and remarry was not really a thing that happened. However, Chopin tended to base some of the story off of her own life. Terese', was a widow, as was Chopin. David was a divorced man, and this didn't tend to happen very often during the 1890's. However, as time grew on, divorce became more of a prevalent thing in the country. As the time grew on, Terese' and David started falling in love with each other.

Throughout the history of America, many people have been known to have a business, or be a worker, and fall in love with each other. Obviously this is not a scientific proven thing. However, it has been seen numerous times throughout history. Everyone in time reaches their romantic happy ending. The theme of romance has been noticed significantly throughout Chopin's writing.

Throughout history, and even in present day, true and even unique Americanism can be seen and noticed. Each type of person throughout the country has somewhat demonstrated these traits, even if not the same one as listed above. The country has a fully history to be explored of these people that show how unique it was to be an American at their time.