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APPENDICES

- **Kate Chopin's childhood**

Catherine (Kate) O'Flaherty was born in St. Louis, Missouri, USA, on February 8, 1850, the second child of Thomas O'Flaherty of County Galway, Ireland, and Eliza Faris of St. Louis. Kate's family on her mother's side was of French extraction, and Kate grew up speaking both French and English. She was bilingual and bicultural feeling at home in different communities with quite different values and the influence of French life and literature on her thinking is noticeable throughout her fiction. From 1855 to 1868 Kate attended the St. Louis Academy of the Sacred Heart, with one year at the Academy of the Visitation. As a girl, she was mentored by woman—by her mother, her grandmother, and her great grandmother, as well as by the Sacred Heart nuns. Kate formed deep bonds with her family members, with the sisters who taught her at school, and with her life-long friend Kitty Garasché. Much of the fiction Kate wrote as an adult draws on the nurturing she received from women as she was growing up. Kate spent the Civil War in St. Louis, a city where residents supported both the Union and the Confederacy and where her family had slaves in the house. Her half-brother enlisted in the Confederate army, was captured by Union forces, and died of typhoid fever.

- **Kate Chopin's marriage; her life in Louisiana**

At eighteen, Kate was an "Irish Beauty," her friend Kitty later said, with "a droll gift of mimicry" and a passion for music. At about nineteen, through social events held at Oakland, a wealthy estate near St. Louis, Kate met Oscar Chopin of Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana, whose French father had taken the family to Europe during the Civil War. "I am going to be married," Kate confided in her commonplace book, "married to the right man. It does not seem strange as I had thought it would—I feel perfectly calm, perfectly collected. And how surprised everyone was, for I had kept it so secret!" Kate and Oscar were married in 1870.

- **Chopin's Work**

By the late 1890s Kate Chopin was well known among American readers of magazine fiction. Twenty-six of her stories are children's stories those published in or submitted to children's magazines or those similar in subject or theme to those that. Her early novel *At Fault* (1890) had not been much noticed by the public, but *The Awakening* (1899) was widely condemned. Public Library removed *The Awakening* from its open shelves and the book has been challenged twice in recent years. Chopin's third collection of stories, to have been called *A Vocation and a Voice*, was for unknown reasons cancelled by the publisher and did not appear as a separate volume until 1991.

Chopin's novels were mostly forgotten after her death in 1904, but several of her short stories appeared in an anthology within five years after her death, others were reprinted over the years, and slowly people again came to read her. In the 1930s a Chopin biography appeared which spoke well of her short fiction but dismissed *The Awakening* as unfortunate. However, by the 1950s scholars and others recognized that

the novel is an insightful and moving work of fiction. Such readers set in motion a Kate Chopin revival, one of the more remarkable literary revivals in the United States.