



## WELCOME TO THE OPAL WHITELEY TOUR!

As a young writer, Opal Whiteley loved to give special names to animals, people and places. This tour takes you near many places she lived in and wrote about. There are also three covered bridges to explore. Cottage Grove is often called the “Covered Bridge Capital of Oregon”. Cottage Grove is the place that Opal called “the mill town”. Opal also thought of her home outside of town as her own special “fairyl-land”. One of Opal’s gifts was to see the hidden beauty and magic in the everyday things around us. She taught this in her famed nature lectures and hikes. While much has changed in nearly a century, many landmarks that Opal knew can still be found. This tour can be taken by car, bike, or, on horseback on the new Row River Trail Bike Path. To experience the entire tour, follow the numbered items. These numbers correspond to descriptions on this and the other side of this brochure. The tour begins at the park on the corner of 7th and Main Sts. downtown Cottage Grove. Enjoy yourself and don’t forget to notice the beautiful country just outside of Cottage Grove. The many species of trees, native firs, maples and oaks to name a few, were an integral part of Opal’s world. Birds, butterflies, bugs and fish still inhabit this fairyl-land.

1. All America City Square, also known as “Opal Park” is the starting point for the Opal Whiteley guided tour. The mural of Opal in the park was designed and painted by local artist, Connie Huston. The covered bridge is Mosby Creek Bridge and will be seen later in the tour as you travel to Opal’s childhood “lumber camp” home and other areas. The white schoolhouse is Walden School, now a private home.

2. The Bookmine store has been a long time friend of Opal’s, helping to establish an Opal Memorial in years past. The store carries Ben Hoff’s book, “The Singing Creek Where the Willows Grow”. They also carry other books as well as hand made gifts and a nice nursery plant selection.

3. Across the street is the historic Burkholder-Woods building that houses two great places to visit, the Axe and Fiddle and Kalapuya Books. The building was a variety store in Opal’s day and may have been a place to buy crayons for Opal purchased by “the man who wears grey neckties and is kind to mice”.

The Axe and Fiddle is a wonderful place to have a good cup of coffee and bite to eat. If you are around in the evening, you can enjoy some good live entertainment as well. Kalapuya Books has a great selection of hard-to-find books as well as locally crafted art and gifts.

4. You are in for a treat at the CG Museum. Their excellent collection of artifacts shows what life was like in the early days of Cottage Grove when Opal was a child. The building was originally a Catholic church, Our Lady of Perpetual Help built in 1897. There is a story about Opal visiting the church as a young girl. It was said that she fell asleep on one of the pews. The priest carried her quietly out to her home nearby.

5. Cottage Grove Church of Christ. Opal attended this church when she lived in town. There were many Christian Endeavor meetings held here around 1915.

6. Cottage Grove Library, located within the CG Community Center is a good place to view the Opal Whiteley Special Collection. Be sure to notice the bronze statue of Opal as you go in. It was made by local sculptor, Ellen Tykeson and dedicated to the library by South Lane Mental Health in 1998.

7. Gold Mining Museum and CG Historical Society are in the same location at 308 s. 10th St. This “barn” was restored with help from the Stewart Foundation. The Gold Mining Museum has many old mining artifacts. Opal’s Uncle Henry owned one of the first claims in the Bohemia area. The Historical Society has much information on early CG and surrounding areas.

8. Row River Trail Head. If going by foot, bicycle or horseback this is the place to start your journey out to Opal’s “Fairyl-land”.



Opal at Walden School at about 7 or 8 years old. She brought her pet pig, Peter Paul Rubens to school here one day.

## OPAL WHITELEY GUIDED TOUR

### OUT OF DOORS

Do you want to know more of the life of the woods and fields?  
Would you like to find joy in the everyday things around you?  
Hear this Nature Lecture by Miss Opal Whiteley.



Topic \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Place \_\_\_\_\_  
Admission 10 Cents

## IN COTTAGE GROVE OREGON AND NEARBY AREAS



9. If going by car, drive east down Main St. under the over-pass. Just outside town Main St. becomes Mosby Creek Rd. Approximately 2.5 miles to where Quaglia Rd. meets Mosby Creek Rd., turn right onto Quaglia and head south. You will then see what Opal called “the far woods”. This is the location of the lumber mill where the “man who wears grey neckties” worked and where the home of Sadie McKibben stood. The tree farm on the west side of the road was once part of Opal’s family farm. The only place where the “singing creek” can be seen on public land is where the small bridge crosses Quaglia Rd. However, please be careful because many large trucks also use this road.

10. Continue to the intersection of Layng Road, Mosby Creek & Jenkins. This is Walden, where, as Opal says, “the road goes three ways.” On the E side of the road is the Row River Trail-head, a lovely 13 mile bike and hiking path. It follows the old OP&E railroad line that Opal used to ride. Opal writes about the rail yard in her diary.

11. From the place where the road goes three ways, turn left onto Layng Road. You will soon cross the covered bridge over Mosby Creek itself. When Opal mentions the “rivière” she means Mosby Creek. Opal describes crossing this bridge on Page 178 (Chapter 14) of Benjamin Hoff’s 1995 paperback. Or, you can follow the old railroad line from here. Continue 1 mile down Layng Road to the Currin Covered Bridge. This one mile drive from “the place where the road goes three ways” to the Currin Bridge over the Row River is where Opal takes her long ride on William Shakespeare, the old logging horse. This beautiful story is in Chapter 14 (Pages 177 to 183) . Also, Opal noticed a meadowlark on her horseback ride. Keep a sharp ear because you just might hear one of their distinctive calls.



#### Western Meadowlark

To learn more about this bird and to hear it’s call, please use your smart phone to scan the QR code below.

<https://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/western-meadowlark>

or scan the QR here.



12. To find Harms Park, Dorena Bridge, and Star, go right on Row River Road at the Currin Bridge. This is a beautiful drive that follows Row River Rd. eastward 4.4 miles to a resting spot called Harms Park. This is a lovely place to stop and enjoy the view of Dorena Lake.

13. Opal Whiteley spent her teenage years around Dorena. At that time the town of Dorena stood where the lake is now. The entire Row River Valley used to be called Star. The Star post office (where Opal’s mother worked) was closed in 1923. The community of Dorena is now found where the village of Star used to sit. The newly restored Dorena Covered Bridge is a beautiful place to stop and enjoy the river at Rocky Point. Opal used to catch salmon here. You can learn more about historic Dorena, Oregon at: [www.dorenahistoricalsociety.com](http://www.dorenahistoricalsociety.com).



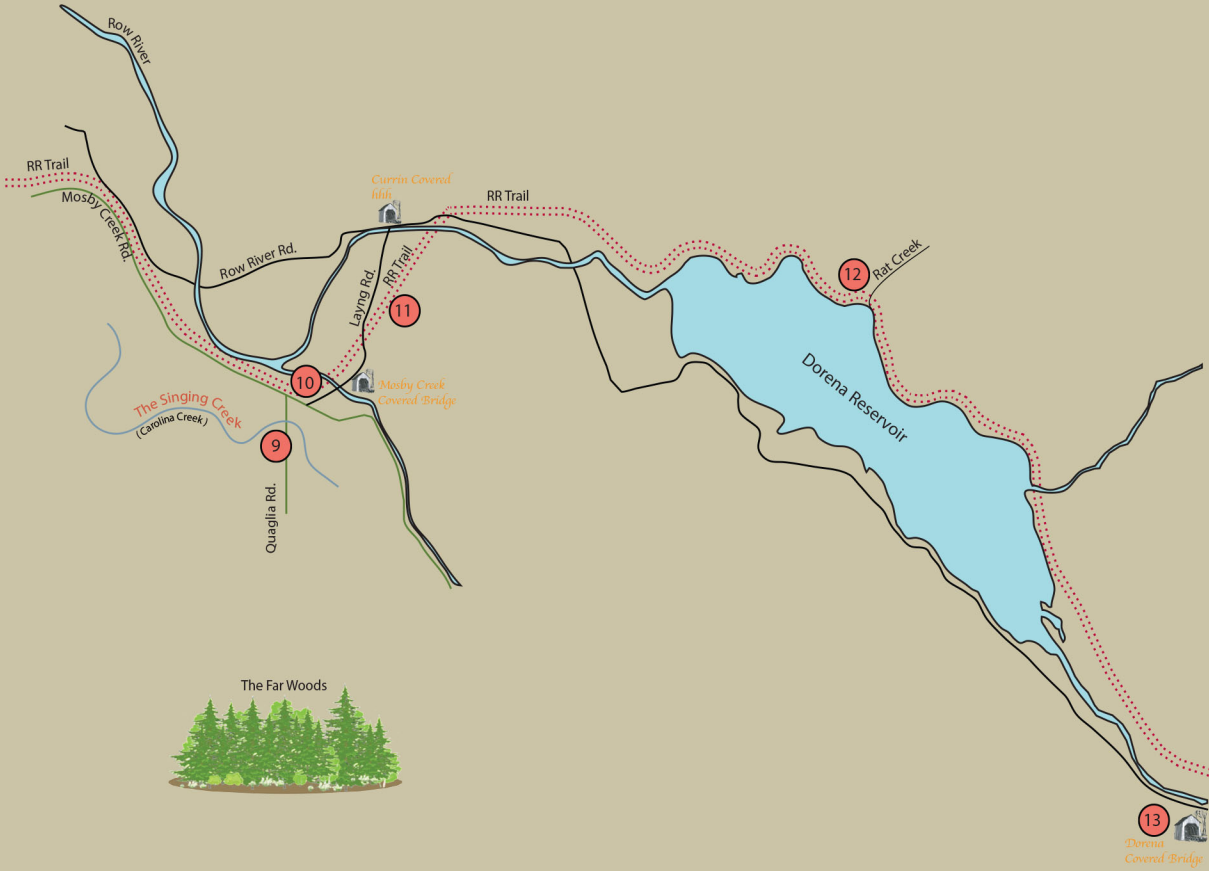
**Picture of an oak tree** or what Opal called a “chêne” (French) in her diary. Look for a large oak grove on the west side of Layng road where Opal went on her long ride on William Shakespeare. There’s a large oak on the W side closer to Row River Rd. under which early pioneers held church services.

If you are lucky enough to find a **Fawn Lily** (right) around mid- spring-time then you have come upon the place where Peter Paul Rubens soul does “love to linger.” This story appears in the diary on p. 226.



**Thank you** for appreciating Cottage Grove, our natural world and the world of Opal Whiteley. For more information about the life of Opal Whiteley, go to: Opalnet.org.

The Cottage Grove Library as well as the University of Oregon Knight Library house special collections of Opal Whiteley’s photos and documents. The Cottage Grove, OR Historical Society also has files of historic information about Opal.



**Right:** Opal at about age 4 or 5 years old. “Now I sit here and print. The baby sleeps on. The wind comes creeping under the door. It calls, “Come, come, petite Française, come.” It calls to me to come go exploring. It sings of the things that are to be found under leaves. It whispers the dreams of the tall fir trees. It does pipe the gentle song the forest sings on gray days.” Opal’s diary- p. 137



**In the summertime** beginning in May, you may see these butterflies that Opal mentioned in her diary and in “The Fairyl-land Around Us.”

1.The Yellow Sulphur butterfly prefers yellow Senna flowers in fields and along roadsides. 2.The Tiger Swallowtail might be spotted resting on Milkweed plants. 3. The Painted Lady can be seen resting on plants such as Thistle, Hollyhock, Cheeseweed, and Tree Mallow.



1.



2.



3.

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