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*The Fantastic Tale of*  
*Opal Whiteley*  
*Steve McQuiddy*

*On the cover*

*Left:* Opal in her early 20s.

*Right:* Opal in the late 1960s, at the Napsbury asylum.

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HE SAGA OF OPAL WHITELEY is one of the oddest stories to come out of an odd land. The Pacific Northwest, long known as the home of dreamers, geniuses and eccentrics, gave us a little girl from a logging camp who grew up to become one of the most notorious literary sensations of the century—on the basis of one book that was out of print within a year.

It's a story of innocence and wonder, of a young girl in a young land. It's a story also of loneliness, tragedy and death, of mental illness and the hard life in rural Oregon at the nineteenth century's turn. But more than that, it's a story of faith, of what we believe and perceive to be true. And every time the name of Opal Whiteley surfaces again, more and more people discover what many have quietly felt for some time: Her diary just might be an American classic.

*The Story of Opal* was first published in 1920, when Opal was nearly twenty-three. Subtitled *The Journal of An Understanding Heart*, the book was celebrated as a work of wonder and imagination, if not genius. Purportedly written during her sixth and seventh years, it is a record of her trips through the woods around Cottage Grove, in western Oregon's Lane County. Opal befriended the animals, birds, flowers and trees, giving them fantastic names from classical mythology, and professed her love for all natural things. "I do like it, this house we do live in, being at the edge of the near woods," she writes in the opening pages. "So many little people do live in the near woods. I do have conversations with them."

The story behind the diary, though, has for years overshadowed the book itself. How it was written—with crayon on scraps of torn-up paper—had skeptics looking closer. Nor did they believe the account of when it was written—critics said she wrote it when she was twenty and tried to pass it off as a childhood work. And Opal’s claim in the book that she was *not* Opal Whiteley, but actually an adopted French princess, made for more sensational copy than the book’s tales of joy, hope and love. Within months, praise turned to disdain, and the remarkable young woman with long, black hair and large, round eyes faced in turn rejection, obscurity and finally death in a London insane asylum.

But she keeps coming back, and interest in her now is stronger than ever. A half dozen versions of her story circulate today, from Seattle to South Carolina, from New York to the United Kingdom. The complete diary is reprinted; there are two biographies, a children’s book, a verse adaptation, at least two musicals and a traveling one-woman play. There’s been talk of a BBC documentary, and yes, even of a Hollywood movie.

In Cottage Grove, time has tempered the controversy, but not dimmed the interest. In 1994, a group headed by South Lane Mental Health counselor Steve Williamson created Opal Park, in the Cerro Gordo community overlooking Dorena Lake. Opal Park—the natural surroundings originally intended for use in treating clients—is part of a growing organization that includes the Opal Whiteley Scholarship Fund, which helps “at-risk” high school students go on to attend college. Funds are partially raised through occasional “Opal Whiteley Weekends.” Hosted by the Bookmine bookstore on Main Street in Cottage Grove, the Weekends feature bus tours to landmarks mentioned in the diary, readings by local actresses portraying Opal, and proceeds from book and memorabilia sales regularly going toward the scholarship fund.

Williamson, like many Opal fans, had heard of the diary through the years. But when he learned that Opal’s case was very much involved with mental illness—schizophrenia, many agree—he began to research her story. “I wanted to give people an idea of what schizophrenia is, what mental illness is,” he says, “using a



*Detail from 1917 poster promoting Opal's nature lectures.*

person that they had heard of, with a story that wasn't scary, that was touching and really human." But one thing led to another, and he is now quite likely Opal's biggest home-town fan. And judging from the response to the Opal Whiteley Weekends, he's not alone. "We have all these people coming out just having the best time," Williamson says. "There will be a few people debating about whether she was remembering past lives when she wrote the French, or debating about schizophrenia, or the effects of child abuse on adult personality—and a couple people claim she just made the whole thing up."

Exactly what she might have made up is still not certain, although author Benjamin Hoff clarifies much of the story in *The Singing Creek Where the Willows Grow: The Mystical Nature Diary of Opal Whiteley*. Originally published in 1986, then reissued by Penguin Books with updates in 1994, it is a reprint of the diary, framed by Hoff's biography of Opal and extensive commentary on his investigation.

Hoff, best known for *The Tao of Pooh*, stumbled upon Opal's diary in 1983. He was so taken with it that he researched Opal's story literally to the point of exhaustion. Digging through library and newspaper archives, interviewing hundreds of people in Lane County and elsewhere, encountering hundreds more theories and opinions, he writes that "bit by bit, facts that had seemed confused and contradictory at first began to arrange themselves in a clear pattern, and an extraordinary story began to emerge."

The oldest of five children, Opal Irene Whiteley was born to Charles Edward ("Ed") and Lizzie (Scott) Whiteley in Colton, Washington on December 11, 1897. A logging family, the Whiteleys moved as Ed's work demanded. "When nearly five years of age we moved to Lane County, Oregon," Opal wrote for the Cottage Grove *Sentinel* in 1915, "and when nearly six years of age we moved from near Wendling to my grandfather's farm at Walden station, about three miles from Cottage Grove."

It was here the events of the published diary took place, and here that Opal said she recorded them. A precocious child who could form words from a primer at age three, she entered Walden school at five, and passed two grade levels her first year. But she

was a dreamer as well, and often enough paid the price for it. "She was always a queer girl," said her grandmother Achsah Scott in 1920. "When she wasn't chattering or asking questions, or reading or writing, she would be looking at nothing with big eyes, in what some people call a 'brown study,' but what I call inattention and absentmindedness."

Nor would Opal respond to the punishment of the day. "Switching didn't seem to make her any different," her grandmother said. "She would climb up in a big evergreen over the pigpen, and get to studying about something, and drop out of the tree into the mud. Lizzie would spank her or switch her, or if Lizzie wasn't feeling up to it, I would."

That evergreen tree Opal climbed might have been Michael Angelo Sanzio Raphael, "a grand fir tree with an understanding soul." According to the diary, Opal would climb onto the barn roof and jump into the tree, nestle in the branches, or "arms," and have one of her conversations. "After I talked with him and listened unto his voice, I slipped down out of his arms. I intended to slip into the barn corral, but I slid off the wrong limb, in the wrong way. I landed in the pig-pen, on top of Aphrodite, the mother pig. She gave a peculiar grunt—it was not like those grunts she gives when she is comfortable."

With Aphrodite, Brave Horatius the shepherd dog and her other animal friends, Opal went "on explores" through the woods. She seemed to have a special way with wild creatures. Her father said she could tame anything in the forest, and one person who knew Opal said that birds and butterflies would sit in her hand (a story reminiscent of Thoreau, who reputedly could row across Walden Pond and pet the wild ducks without disturbing them.) To Opal, all of nature was alive, and all beings of the natural world members of a grand chorus of the Earth. "Earth-voices are glad voices, and earth-songs come up from the ground through the plants," she writes in the diary, "and in their flowering, and in the days before these days are come, they do tell the earth-songs to the wind. And the wind in her goings does whisper them to folks to print for other folks, so other folks do have knowings of earth's songs. When I grow up, I am going to write for children—and

grownups that haven't grown up too much—all the earth-songs I now do hear.”

She also felt a scientific approach was necessary for a complete understanding of nature. To that end, Opal gathered thousands of specimens of plants and rocks and insects, which she studied with a dedication and voracity that would later amaze nearly all who met her.

Having joined the local chapter of the Junior Christian Endeavor, a religious organization for rural children, Opal translated her knowledge into lectures on the scientific and spiritual wonder of nature. Parents would bring their children to hear her speak, and find themselves enchanted as well. There was something about the little girl, just a teenager, who seemed to know everything about plants and animals but spoke of them as if they were human. Hoff relates in *The Singing Creek* the words of a woman who had known Opal in Junior Endeavor: “She told stories. I remember one time the lesson was about the Resurrection, and she told us all about how, just as a person is buried, a seed is buried, and how from the seed there comes later a beautiful flower, and how death is not really death but being born into a new environment.”

Another woman who'd attended Opal's classes said, “On one of our mornings of nature study, we were in the city fairgrounds park, and we would pledge friendship to a tree by holding up our hands.”

There were other incidents, underscoring the humor in events that adults often forget to see. “When I taught at the lumber camps,” Opal told the *Oregonian* in 1917, “we had what we called a menagerie, for we studied every kind of natural thing. The children would bring anything they wished. One day a little boy came to the back door of the house where I was staying and said he had something for the menagerie. ‘Bring it right in,’ I told him. When he deposited his burden on the table a whole hatful of lizards ran over the table, much to the consternation of the other people in the house.”

In the diary, Opal is often the source of adults' consternation, particularly her mother's—or “the mamma,” as Opal calls her in



*Opal (left) and her younger sister, Pearl.*

the book: “By-and-by, when the washing part was done, then the mamma went to the grandma’s house to get some soap. When she went away she did say she wished she didn’t have to bother with carrying water to scrub the floor. She doesn’t. While she has been gone a good while, I have plenty of water on the floor for her to mop it when she gets back. When she did go away, she said to me to wring the clothes out of the wash. There were a lot of clothes in the wash—skirts and aprons and shirts and dresses and clothes that you wear under dresses. Every bit of clothes I took out of the tubs I carried into the kitchen and squeezed all the water out on the kitchen floor. That makes lots of water everywhere—under the cook-table and under the cupboard and under the stove. Why, there is most enough water to mop the three floors, and then some water would be left over. I did feel glad feels because it was so as the mamma did want it.” Her mother, of course, did not want it that way—and Opal later reports that on her backside “I did have many sore feels.”

The diary is full of such charming tales—almost too charming for the cynical reader, says Benjamin Hoff. “People either love Opal, or they don’t seem to have any feeling for her at all.” Some have said that no child could write like that, express herself with both innocence and perception, he adds. “But I think that those people have forgotten what it was like to be a kid.”

In 1915 Opal—newly elected as state superintendent of the Junior Christian Endeavor—came to the attention of Elbert Bede, editor of the Cottage Grove *Sentinel*. He gave her a rather heady introduction in the May 5 edition of his paper: “Probably there is no one who is not familiar with the Bible story of how the child Savior, reared in lowly surroundings, stood in the temple and imparted knowledge to the wise men. In some ways the life of little 17-year-old Opal Whiteley reminds one of this incident in the life of the Savior. She too has risen from obscure surroundings and in those surroundings has developed most remarkable knowledge.”

Opal then outlined her plan to teach children across Oregon about God by explaining to them the plants and trees, rocks and rivers and sea shells. “My nature study is of much help to me in

my work with the juniors, for I find that the child’s heart readily unfolds to the true and the beautiful,” she said. “To me all God’s out-of-doors is one grand cathedral.”

“She is a product of the Oregon outdoors who knows that outdoors almost as well as the One who made it,” Bede duly concluded.

This statement was shortly affirmed by officials at the University of Oregon. In Eugene for the Christian Endeavor state convention, Opal visited the university and astounded professors there with her knowledge of the natural sciences. Although she hadn’t yet completed her high school credits, university officials unanimously agreed that Opal should be admitted. “Tutored by nature, a tiny, seventeen-year-old mountain girl, her hair down her back, has opened the eyes of the Eugene teaching profession and left it gasping for breath,” announced the Eugene *Daily Guard*. “Entrance rules have been cast aside; scholarships are proposed.”

“This experience happens but once in a generation,” said Warren D. Smith, head of geology. “She knows more about geology than do many students that have graduated from my department.”

But perhaps there was a higher motive to her scientific knowledge, wrote UO librarian Inez Fortt in 1969. “It was in a high school science class that Opal discovered the ‘universal order’ of nature,” she wrote in *Old Oregon*, the university alumni magazine. “Through that discovery Opal began to adopt a ‘universal order’ for her own personal affairs, too. She began to plan in minute detail her own life, a factor that may help to explain some later events.”

Opal entered the UO in the fall of 1916. The Whiteleys now lived in Springfield, and Opal made the daily commute across the Willamette River. She soon became notorious for spending many of her extra moments, including the minutes between classes, reading. “Inside of four months she completed reading 10,582 pages of library books, a record unsurpassed by any other university student,” said the *Oregonian* in April 1917. “Her reading has covered a wide range, including natural sciences, eugenics, biography, the Bible, art, and homemaking, an average of 529 pages a week.”

She was also quite a sight on campus, often running after some butterfly or insect, with her long braids and skirts flying. And one day Mrs. Prince Campbell, wife of the university president, came upon Opal kneeling on the ground, looking down and singing a hymn. Mrs. Campbell asked what she was doing. "I am singing to one of God's creatures," Opal replied. And in front of her on the ground was an earthworm.

"If Opal were on campus today," said a former student in 1969, "she would be the prize hippie of all. She was a walking exponent of 'love,' and she constantly talked what would be the hippie line of today: that people must meet and love one another."

She was ahead of more than the hippie movement, says Benjamin Hoff. "She was New Age before New Age ever came along." She predated the environmental movement as well—and Hoff believes we've yet to catch up. "Opal related to trees and animals on a completely different level than we're even doing now, so I think she was still 50 to 100 years ahead of us."

Already interested in the mind's power to influence actual events, Opal attended a series of lectures her first year in college on the "Young Man or Woman too large for their Present Place." The speaker was Jean Morris Ellis, and her subjects concerned character analysis, brain building, hypnotism and telepathy. "Our imagination is the instrument of reality," Opal wrote in her notebook. "By means of it we are brought face-to-face with the past, and by means of it we prophesy the future."

But a double misfortune in early 1917 could not have been prophesied. Lizzie Whiteley died in May, after a prolonged bout with cancer. Her maternal grandfather died the next day. "I do not believe Opal ever quite recovered from the blow," wrote Inez Fortt in 1969. "She was never again active in Junior Endeavor or the church. She very seldom saw her family." (A reaction that has since been attributed to her worsening schizophrenia.)

Living now in a small house on Franklin Boulevard in Eugene, Opal turned her attention fully to nature studies. She supported herself through lectures, charging a ten-cent admission. Using handbills picturing herself in a white dress, with butterflies perched on her head, shoulders and hands, she advertised topics



*Opal in 1918. The photo was staged to help her launch a movie career.*

such as “Nearer to the Heart of Nature” and “The Fairyland Around Us”—which she would later incorporate into a book bearing the latter title. “When she was a little girl, Opal dreamed of someday writing books for children about the inhabitants of the field and forest,” writes Hoff in *The Singing Creek*. “As she grew older, the dream became a driving force.”

But it was her move to Los Angeles that brought the next stage into full relief. Before she left Eugene in February 1918, Opal had a set of photographs taken of her in various poses—including one in an Indian costume and another playing the violin. Mrs. Elizabeth Fox De Cou, then dean of women, recalled that watching Opal on campus with the photographers and props was like watching a movie queen direct publicity shots—which was precisely Opal’s intention. The photos were for a portfolio she took to California, hoping to make a name for herself in the burgeoning movie industry. “Look first for work in films,” begins a list of her plans for California, followed by “Study at the studio”, “See DeMille” and “Write and see other directors.” Lecturing and nature studies are farther down the list.

The movie people, however, were unimpressed. After six weeks of daily trips to the studios and agencies, Opal admitted defeat. But turning again to her lectures, she soon was teaching the children of wealthy Californians about nature. Her lectures became so popular that Opal saw an opportunity to create the book she’d long dreamed of, and set about soliciting funds from the rich and famous. She raised an amazing \$9400 on subscription, but made so many changes in the book that the printers demanded more. When she ran out of cash, the plates were destroyed, and Opal was left with a collection of some of the printed sheets. Heartbroken, she then methodically set about pasting in and labeling hundreds of illustrations by hand, working herself—again—to exhaustion.

Here is where some believe she actually wrote the diary. “It was at this time, I think, that Opal ‘fell apart’—or rather she lived in two worlds, one as an adult and the other as a child again in the woods with her little companions,” wrote Inez Fortt. “Confused and defeated, dependent on the generosity of friends and acquaintances,

Opal probably withdrew from the life around her.” As her mind regressed, she thought and wrote as a child, a royal princess in Fairyland, said Fortt. “As she sat and printed, the dream and the reality fused together, and the child-princess and Opal became one.”

Not so, says Hoff, citing his extensive research presented at length in *The Singing Creek*. “If Opal had written her childhood diary in Los Angeles, it would have been during the seven-month interval between the end of 1918 and her trip to the East Coast to find a publisher for *The Fairyland Around Us*.” In that time, he says, she would have had to print a quarter million words on the same kind of old paper the original diary was printed on, then tear them up so carefully as to fool everyone who examined the manuscript at a later date. “All this would have had to follow her exhausting work on *The Fairyland Around Us*, and the collapse of her health caused by the destruction of its plates.”

What happened next, though, no one denies. And the story of how Opal’s diary came to the world’s attention is related in every account of her life:

Her attempts to get *Fairyland* published led Opal to Boston, specifically to the office of Ellery Sedgwick, editor of *The Atlantic Monthly* and one of the most influential literary figures of his time. He wasn’t excited by the book Opal showed him, but he was enchanted by its author. She was “very young and eager and fluttering, like a bird in a thicket,” he later wrote.

He asked her about her background. She told him. He was curious—had Opal kept a diary? Yes, she had. But it was torn to bits, ostensibly by a jealous sister. Opal, however, had saved the pieces in an enormous hat box. “We telegraphed for them, and they came, hundreds, thousands, one might almost say millions of them,” Sedgwick wrote in his introduction to the diary. “Some few were large as a half-sheet of notepaper; more, scarce big enough to hold a letter of the alphabet.”

Opal spent the next eight months in Boston, at the house of Sedgwick’s mother-in-law, piecing together the diary like a jigsaw puzzle. It was then serialized in *The Atlantic*, beginning March 1920. The book came out in August, and was an immediate suc-



cess. It gave a picture of life as seen through the eyes of a child, declared the *New York Times*, “eyes that have been touched.”

“It will be like no book that ever was,” said *Life* magazine, “and may grow up to become a classic.”

The book certainly was unlike any other. The original manuscript, which Opal claimed she had kept in a hollow log, was written on a mish-mash of butcher paper, grocery bags and old envelopes. The letters were in colored pencil and crayon, left for her by “the fairies” (very likely Sadie McKibben and the Man Who Wears Grey Neckties and is Kind to Mice, both mentioned by name elsewhere in the dairy) and the capital letters ran together with no punctuation, broken only at the edge of the paper. The stories were charming tales of taking Peter Paul Rubens the pig to school, reading poems to William Shakespeare the horse, and—even after a switching from “the mamma” for yet another mistake—Opal’s joy at simply being alive:

“I sit here on the doorstep, printing this on the wrapping paper Sadie McKibben gave me.... By the step is Brave Horatius. At my feet is [a wood rat named] Thomas Chatterton Jupiter Zeus. I hear songs—lullaby songs of the trees. The back part of me feels a bit sore, but I am happy, listening to the twilight music of God’s good world. I’m real glad I’m alive.”

To a world weary and disillusioned from its first global war, this was a revelation. But along with the charming stories, odd phonetic spelling system and a syntax that read like a literal translation from another language, Opal made a further claim: that she was in fact not Opal Whiteley, but the kidnapped daughter of a French prince—and she had been substituted for the real Opal Whiteley, who had drowned. Her “Angel Father,” she said, was Henri d’Orléans, of the deposed royal family, who had died in India in 1901. Her “Angel Mother” had also died—in a shipwreck, according to Opal’s book introduction. French words, too, and acrostics spelling out the Angel Father’s name, were strung throughout the book.

After her true parents died, her guardians had taken her on a long trip, Opal wrote. “Then it was they put me with Mrs. Whiteley. The day they put me with her was a rainy day, and I



“The Author and the fragments of her diary,”  
from the original 1920 edition of *The Story of Opal*.

thought she was a little afraid of them, too. She took me on the train and in the stage-coach to the lumber camp. She called me Opal Whiteley, the same name as that of another girl who was the same size as I was when her mother lost her.”

This “foster-child fantasy” is common enough, although most grow out of it by adulthood, wrote E. S. Conklin, psychology professor at the UO, who studied Opal’s case in 1920. Conklin, through heavy correspondence with many who knew the Whiteleys, concluded that her father had a “somewhat difficult personality, said to be changeable,” and her mother “appeared to be cultured and refined,” but also “would do strange things.” Whether Opal inherited or was adversely affected by these character traits, he didn’t say. But he was clearly satisfied that Opal’s claim of adoption was a fantasy.

But the words in the book were real enough, as was their effect. Skepticism bred charges of fraud, and reporters rushed to Cottage Grove. Editors Bede and Sedgwick launched their own investigations, gathering letters and testimony from countless people. One 1920 letter to Sedgwick gives information on nearly thirty people he had inquired after. Bede in the meantime published the results of his investigations in a steady stream of articles, picked up by the national press (and later reworked into his 1954 book, *Fabulous Opal Whiteley*.) The *Christian Science Monitor* ran commentary in August 1920. *Publishers Weekly* kept tabs on her. Fred Lockley of Portland’s *Oregon Daily Journal* published an interview with Grandmother Scott in *Bookman* magazine. By the time the *Harvard Advocate* chimed in with a parody of Opal’s story, “Isette Likely,” the Whiteley family had left town and changed their name. Soon enough, the book was out of print, and Opal out of the country.

While many agree that this part of the story is a tragedy, Hoff says it’s a crime. “At best, her ‘exposers’ were guilty of inexcusable bungling. At worst, they were guilty of deliberate falsification of evidence,” he writes. “Whatever their motives, whatever the extent of their awareness, they were responsible for the defamation of a highly sensitive woman who was incapable of defending herself, and for the encouragement and intensification of a tragedy.”

“The person I would really like to have talked to was Sadie McKibben,” says Steve Williamson. “I’m just certain that she was the real-life model for Angel Mother, because she does everything with Opal that Angel Mother was supposed to have done.” Sadie McKibben taught Opal about reading, he says. She went on walks with Opal, taught her songs and told her to name the animals. “If I could just prove that the McKibben family had a library, or even just a handful of the right books—of classical myths and history books—that would pretty well prove that a lot of that knowledge did come when she was a child,” he says. “But I don’t know for sure what kind of library they had.”

With the help of Cottage Grove historian John Wilson, Williamson has made some progress. They recently located Sadie McKibben’s unmarked grave in the Fir Grove Cemetery, and supporters and friends have placed proper identification on the graves of both Sadie and her husband, Frank, as described in Williamson’s article, “The Lost Grave of Sadie McKibben.”

Opal, meanwhile, hadn’t lost her ability to charm and delight the monied set. She was sponsored for a trip to Europe, and spent some time with the mother of Henri d-Orléans in France. She then secured funds to follow her claimed father’s footsteps through India, and lived in that country for a time as a royal guest of the Maharana of Udaipur. But after the early 1930s, she disappeared. And to this day there is no known record of what happened....

Until 1948, when she resurfaced in London, starving and surrounded by books in a crumbling tenement. She was declared a ward of the state and committed to Napsbury Hospital at St. Albans. She wrote letters claiming that she was trapped, a prisoner there—although her doctor said she was free to go whenever she liked, recalls Carlisle Moore, professor emeritus of English at the University of Oregon. “But it was obvious that she couldn’t take care of herself.”

Moore visited Opal a dozen times during a sabbatical in the late 1960s in London. Opal had a room at Napsbury, he says, and was quite calm. They’d go out to the garden, where Moore sometimes took pictures while they talked. “She was highly intelligent,” he says. “So clear in her recollections of Eugene and the univer-

sity, and of all the things that she had done, that she was sort of ‘mad north-northwest.’ She was very clear about things that were good and that were verifiable, and really—almost insane.”

He pauses a moment. “I hesitate to use that word, but I’m certain she was not in possession of the real facts of her life.” Instead, he says, she went on and on about being born in Italy, growing up in France. “She knew she was not believed, and yet she insisted on it.”

Interestingly enough, the Napsbury Hospital staff began in the 1960s to address her as Françoise d’Orléans. They even changed the name in her records.

“All this is queer, decidedly queer,” Moore says in a voice both informed and perplexed. “You know you’ve got a mind working which is not like ours.” She had special talents, but then she lacked things as well, he adds. “You can’t help reading that diary without being enthralled. It’s delightful, and yet—you know there’s something missing. What’s missing is reality.”

The author of *The Story of Opal* died at Napsbury Hospital in 1992, at the age of 94. She is buried in Highgate Cemetary, under the name Françoise Marie de Bourbon-Orléans—and Opal Whiteley.

## *Resources for further study*

Some people can’t get enough of Opal. If you want to know more, here are some places to start.

The Bookmine, 702 E. Main Street, Cottage Grove. (541) 942-7414. Ongoing display of Opal information, including books, articles, and “Opal’s Fairyland,” a free self-guided tour written by Steve Williamson. Benjamin Hoff sometimes comes down for the “Opal Whiteley Weekends.”

*The Singing Creek Where the Willows Grow: The Mystical Nature Diary of Opal Whiteley* by Benjamin Hoff and Opal Whiteley. (Penguin Books, New York, 1994.) Reprint of the diary with Hoff’s complete commentary and biography of Opal. Currently in print.

*Opal: the Journal of an Understanding Heart* by Jane Boulton. (Crown Trade Paperbacks, New York, 1995.) Poetry adaptation of parts of the diary. Boulton also prepared *Only Opal*, a children’s book version (Philomel Books, Putnam, New York 1994.) Both currently in print.

*Fabulous Opal Whiteley* by Elbert Bede. (Binfords & Mort, Portland, 1954.) Compendium of Bede’s decades of newspaper articles, reworked into book form, by the man usually credited with “discovering” Opal. Currently in print.

*Opal Whiteley: The Unsolved Mystery*, by E. S. Bradburne. (Putnam & Co., London, 1962.) A reprint of the diary, with a lengthy commentary from the British point of view. Out of print for many years, it is now available in a reprint.

Special collections at the University of Oregon Knight Library in Eugene, Cottage Grove Public Library, Oregon Historical Society in Portland, and the Oregon State Library in Salem have a fair amount of material concerning Opal. Some of it is quite fragile, and use is restricted.

The Massachusetts Historical Society also has a collection, focusing on Opal’s time working with *The Atlantic Monthly*. Another Opal Whiteley collection is maintained by the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts at the University of London.