

# Our Brothers in the Camps

By Opal Whiteley, age 17  
Written in late 1916

At five o'clock the lights begin to shine from the windows of the camp homes. Between six and seven the men are on their way to work, and as the seven o'clock whistle blows they start briskly at the tasks for the day.

It is a little past nine o'clock when four loud shrill whistles are blown. Now the ring of the woodsmen's ax is not heard, the lines along the chute lie still, no sound comes from the donkey engines, even the usual whirl and buzz of the mill is stopped for the time being. A pause has suddenly come in the day's work. From out of the woods, from off the hill, from around the pond, and from out of the mill men are running; all in one direction - toward the canyon.

Only a few minutes have passed since the signal was heard (that signal which puts fear into the heart of every man, woman, and child of the camp). Now the men are in the canyon talking in low subdued tones around the lifeless form of a comrade.

A man, who has come from the city to place a large order for his company, observes the bringing in of the body, sees how tenderly they carry the still form, watches the children as they run from their play, sees the mothers and wives gathered in groups. As when "the Boss" steps aside from the men a moment to speak to this man he is met with by the question "Why all this commotion about a lumberjack?"

"The Boss" looking him square in the face says "Yes - he is a lumberjack," and turns again to the group.

The stranger, while waiting for an opportunity to place his order, walks about the camp. He hears the children sobbing and when one of them explains to him that this man was the children's friend the stranger begins to think that probably the lumberjack is somewhat human. When later in the day he hears of how this "lumberjack" went cheerily whistling to his work each morning, of



courtesy photo  
**Opal Whiteley, age 17, about the time she wrote her essay extolling the lumber camps of her childhood.**

his courtesy to all woman, of his kindness in taking care of an old man in the camp, and of how he was ever ready to help anyone in need, he understands why the woman and children, and even some of the "loggers," are sobbing.

We are proud of our lumber industry and we boast of our timberland as one of our greatest natural resources. But when we see the great carloads of lumber do we stop to think of the work it has taken to place this lumber on the market, or do we take time to be interested in the lives of those whose work contributes to the lumber industry.

Shall we, like this stranger, go on busy with our own interests until, by chance, the fact is brought home to us that after all these lumbermen are human beings? Or will we reach out the hand of fellowship to our brothers in the camps, recognizing that these ("lumberjacks" and "loggers") need our friendship, and appreciating that their lives are worthwhile?

## Not just a collegiate essay:

Commentary on 'Our Brothers in the Camps'

BY STEPHEN WILLIAMSON  
For the Sentinel

People who know about Cottage Grove's Opal Whiteley tend to fall into two groups - people who think she is a fake and people who think she is a heroine. This unpublished story, written for class in 1916 when Opal was a freshman at the University of Oregon, challenges what many of us think we know about her.

Opal is often seen as a princess of the natural environment. Yet she was also a child of a logging and gold mining family, growing up in lumber camps all along the Row River. She always wrote positively about the men and women who worked in the timber industry. In her childhood diary, it is a logger, the "man who wears grey neckties" who gives her paper and pens - as does Sadie McKibben, whose family owns the "mill by the far woods".

This little short story was written for a class assignment in her freshman year in the fall of 1916. Opal asks the reader to understand and appreciate the hard work of lumberjacks. In some ways this story, "Our Brothers in the Camps", is more like a morality tale than a short story. It is much like the sort of lectures and sermons Opal both heard and gave when she was growing up. It starts as a short story but soon turns into a ringing defense of working men and women.

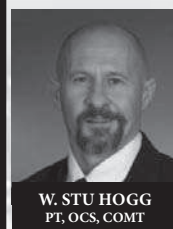
Opal even uses the term "comrade", a popular Marxist term of the 1917 Russian Revolution. A "rich stranger from the city" who comes to buy lumber learns a lesson in humanity through his visit to the lumber camp. There is also a favorable portrait of the local woods "Boss". Opal may be more interested in the urban-rural divide than in management-labor disputes. She judges people not on their wealth but on their kindness and work.

What does this paper say about the young woman who wrote it? Clearly, it's autobiographical. This is not just a collegiate essay - it is her own testament. This story may be her response to perceived prejudices and judgments from city kids toward a girl from the country. It may also show how much she craved acceptance: before, in Cottage Grove,

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Stephen Williamson is a longtime member of the Cottage Grove Historical Society and an authority on Opal Whiteley.

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# Worship Directory

## WORSHIP WITH US

**DRAIN:**  
**Gateway Family Fellowship**  
Church of the Nazarene  
337 "C" St. Drain, OR  
Sunday School 9:30am  
Worship 10:45am  
Living Hope Free Lunch  
Wed. at 12:30pm  
541-836-7051 www.drainnaz.org

**HOPE U.M.C.**  
131 W "A" St. Drain, OR  
541-315-1617  
Pastor: Lura Kidner-Miesen  
Youth & Families Pastor: Seth Bailey  
Services: 9am and 10:30am  
Christian Education  
Nursery for pre-k - 3rd Grade  
www.6thandgibbs.com

**COTTAGE GROVE:**  
**6th & Gibbs Church of Christ**  
195 N. 6th St. • 541-942-3822  
Pastor: Aaron Earlywine  
Youth & Families Pastor: Seth Bailey  
Services: 9am and 10:30am  
Christian Education  
Nursery for pre-k - 3rd Grade  
www.6thandgibbs.com

**Calvary Baptist Church**  
77873 S 6th St • 541-942-4290  
Pastor: Riley Hendricks  
Sunday School: 9:45am  
Worship: 11:00am  
The Journey: Sunday 5:00pm  
Praying Thru Life: Wednesday 6:00pm

**Calvary Chapel Cottage Grove**  
1447 Hwy 99 (Village Plaza)  
541-942-6842  
Pastor: Jeff Smith  
Two Services on Sun: 9am & 10:45am  
Youth Group Bible Study  
Child Care 10:45am Service Only  
www.cgcalvary.org

**Church of Christ**  
420 Monroe St • 541-942-8565  
Sunday Service: 10:30am

**Cottage Grove Bible Church**  
1200 East Quincy Avenue  
541-942-4771  
Pastor: Bob Singer  
Worship 11am  
Sunday School: 9:45am  
AWANA age 3-8th Grade,  
Wednesdays Sept-May, 6:30pm  
www.cg4.org

**Cottage Grove Faith Center**  
33761 Row River Rd. • 541-942-4851  
Lead Pastor: Isaac Hovet  
www.cg4.tv  
Summer Schedule: Sunday Service 10am  
Full Children's Ministry available

**Covered Bridge Nazarene Church**  
152 S. M St.  
541-942-4422  
Pastor: Cindy Slaymaker  
Sunday School: 9:30am  
Worship 10:30am

**Delight Valley Church of Christ**  
33087 Saginaw Rd. East  
541-942-7711  
Pastor: Bob Friend  
Two Services:  
9am - Classic in the Chapel  
10:30am - Contemporary in the Auditorium

**First Presbyterian Church**  
3rd and Adams St • 541-942-4479  
Pastor: Karen Hill  
Worship: 10:00am  
Sunday School: 10:00am  
www.cgpresbynews.com

**Grove Community Church**  
77820 Mosby Creek Rd.  
Cottage Grove, OR 97424  
541-942-0123  
Pastor: Bryan Parsons  
Worship: 10:30 a.m.  
Nursery: Infant - Pre-K  
Kid's Church: K to 5th grade

**Hope Fellowship**  
United Pentecostal Church  
100 S. Gateway Blvd. • 541-942-2061  
Pastor: Dave Bragg  
Worship: 11:00am Sunday  
Bible Study: 7:00pm Wednesday  
www.hopefellowshipupc.com  
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**Living Faith Assembly**  
467 S. 10th St. • 541-942-2612  
Pastor Rulon Combs  
Sunday School All Ages 9am  
Worship & Children's  
Church 10:00 am  
Sat Evening Service 6:00pm  
Youth 180 Mondays 5:30-8pm

**Non-Denominational Church of Christ**  
1041 Pennoyer Ave \* 541-767-0447  
Preachers: Tony Martin & Robert Evans  
Sunday Bible Study: 10:00am  
Sunday Worship: 10:50am & 5:30pm  
www.pennoyeravcoc.com

**Old Time Gospel Fellowship**  
103 S. 5th St. • 541-942-4999  
Pastor: Jim Edwards  
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Catholic Churches  
1025 N. 19th St.  
541-942-3420 / 541-942-4712  
Pastor: Roy L. Antunez, S.J.  
Euch. Liturgies; Sat. 5:30pm  
Sun. 10:30am  
St. Philip Benizi, Creswell:  
552 Holbrook Lane • 541-895-8686  
Sunday: 8:30am

**St. Andrews Episcopal Church**  
1301 W. Main • 541-767-9050  
Rev. Lawrence Crumb  
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Worship: Sunday 10:30am  
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**Seventh-day Adventist Church**  
820 South 10th Street  
541-942-5213  
Pastor: Kevin Miller  
Bible Study: Saturday, 9:15 am  
Worship Service: Saturday, 10:40 am  
Mid-week Service: Wednesday, 1:00 pm

**Trinity Lutheran Church**  
6th & Quincy • 541-942-2373  
Pastor: James L. Markus  
Sunday School & Adult Education 9:15am  
Sunday Worship 10:30 am  
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llccg.com

**United Methodist Church**  
334 Washington • 541-942-3033  
Pastor: Lura Kidner-Miesen  
Worship: 10:30am  
Comm. Dinner (Adults \$5, Kids Free)  
2nd & 3rd Monday 5-6:00pm  
cottagegroveumc.org

**"VICTORY" Country Church**  
913 S. 6th Street • 541-942-5913  
Pastor: Barbara Dockery  
Worship Service: 10:00am  
Message: 11:00am  
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**Our Worship Directory is a weekly feature in the newspaper. If your congregation would like to be a part of this directory, please contact the Cottage Grove Sentinel at 541-942-3325.**