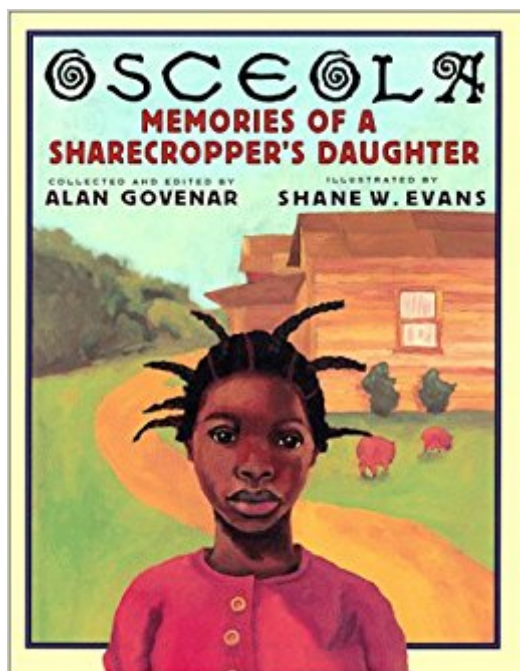


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Osceola: Memories Of A Sharecropper's Daughter



Synopsis

A sharecropper's daughter describes her childhood in Texas in the early years of the twentieth century. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Govenar here gathers the recollections of Osceola Mays, an African-American woman born in Texas in 1909, from interviews and conversations that he conducted with Mays over a period of 15 years. In brief one- and two-page sections, Mays's engrossing first-person voice recounts snippets from her early days. Especially strong are the vignettes that focus on specific moments, such as "How I Got My Name," in which Mays explains how she changed her name from Garnell (she was named after a neighboring white girl: "It was a carryover from slave days, when slaves were given the names of their masters") to Osceola after meeting an Indian by that name, and the bittersweet juxtaposition of "Santa Claus Night" with its immediate successor, "Mama Dies," in which Mays contrasts Christmas before and after the death of her mother. But if Govenar's editing retains the feel of oral history, it also lacks a sense of an overall story arc. As a result, the volume does not have the cumulative emotional impact of collected histories like Leon Walter Tillage's *Leon's Story* and Eloise Greenfield's *Childtimes*. Mays's warm, personable and pleasantly meandering manner emanates throughout the volume, and her history is well worth hearing. Newcomer Evans's framed portraits with skewed perspectives heighten the drama of each memory. The paintings of a grieving motherless Osceola facing away from readers as she looks through a seemingly quavering window frame, an illustration of her baptism and a portrait of her sharecropper father, dwarfed by the long

rows he's plowed in a cotton field, are especially moving. Ages 8-12. (Mar.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Grade 3-7-Over a period of 15 years, Govenar talked with and recorded the reminiscences of Osceola Mays, now 91 and living in Dallas. He has selected and edited these recollections to form a thematically arranged look at rural life in East Texas, almost a century ago, from the viewpoint of an African-American girl. Bite-sized chapters (each less than 500 words) address such topics as her hometown, getting baptized, slavery, "Santa Claus Night," the death of her mother, and school. The narrative style reflects her Southern heritage, and the voice is that of a storyteller. The casual tone should draw in readers, especially as her memories will seem so foreign to most-a world with few cars, strict segregation, and sharecropping. Likewise, the tales that her neighbors shared with her of slavery personalize that great evil in a way that history books cannot, just as her recollections of family members and friends make it clear that emancipation did not mean equality. Nevertheless, the book's tone reflects that the woman's spirit is not weighed down by bitterness or anger; the text provides a rounded look at the society into which she was born. Evans's plentiful illustrations are brightly colored and naive, making them a sympathetic complement to the artless narration. Although easily read independently, the book-owing to the brevity of the chapters-also works well as a read-aloud. Coop Renner, Moreno Elementary School, El Paso, TX Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Book as I expected.

Ah! Osceola! Hmm....quite impressive. Interesting story! As a Filipina-American, I know how important it is to define your cultural background...how our stories of struggles & successes help shape not only us but those we share it with...how so little can shape someone to have a strong mind! With the author & Ms. Mays both currently residing in Dallas, it makes me like the book even more. The illustrations are such Shane's style. Definitely Shane's style! The vibrant colors & unique style speak the hidden words of years past yet help you imagine you being in that exact spot done with the elegance of the proper era. I say, a book done with honors.....good job! Being based on a true story with some history behind it, it makes me enjoy this children's book even more without even seeing it as a children's book but more of a historical documentary. I like that! 2 thumbs up & a standing ovation! Osceola....wouldn't it be interesting to run into her or the author sometime in Big-D?

If there were 10 stars I would rate this book a 10....it is factual and well written....I was born and raised in Waskom and lived on the rural route she mentioned....I am familiar with some of the events and folks she spoke about...Readers I highly recommend this book...We Waskomites are proud of her.

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