

Whose voice tells history?

Eva Mosely (1918-2009): Volunteer at the Hospital ECU and owner of Quality Printers in Cranberry with her husband Jack Hanna.

- *Excerpts from John Carlson's speech at Eva's Funeral April, 6 2009. (Oral Histories Tapes Transcribed)*

Eva was born on Saltspring Island and moved with her family to Cranberry while she was still in Elementary School.

Her father; George Mosely, was of African, European, and Hawaiian ancestry. Born in Virginia and raised by his grandmother, he worked at odd jobs in various cities across America and then eventually landed in Victoria. There he met Eva's mother, Martha, who was the grand-daughter of an English settler named Sampson and a Cowichan woman who had homesteaded on Saltspring Island.

Eva herself was born on Saltspring Island, and moved with her family to Victoria as a young girl. She had two sisters. Bernice and Grace. When Eva was still in elementary school, her father lost his job in a Victoria at a shoe store. From there, they relocated to Perry Ville in Cranberry where her father looked for work in the Powell River mill.

Every day for months, George Mosely went to the mill gates with a couple dozen other men in the hope of getting casual work. Everyday different men got work, but never Mosely and his friend. It wasn't until a year later that someone showed the two a union contract that stated that Orientals and African-Americans were barred from employment.

Later the family moved to the Shingle Mill and then later still to what was then called the China Block on the Wildwood Hill. It was while they were living in the China Block that Eva's parents separated, and a year later, her father left town. Eva and her mother and sisters moved back to Cranberry and rented a house on Graveyard Hill. They stayed there several years until Eva's mother couldn't afford the rent and then they moved to a little house that Eva called "the shack" just off Drake St. It was in that house, where Eva's mother operated a small restaurant specializing in hot tamales and fried chicken, that Eva met Jack Hanna.

Max Cameron, the principal of Brooks school, paid Eva's school fees when her mother couldn't afford it and he encouraged her to pursue her dream of becoming a surgery nurse. Eva graduated from Brooks High School with top grades, however, she was prevented from being accepted into nursing school because of the colour of her skin. She nevertheless found a way to help others: "she worked for numerous charities throughout her life and is perhaps best known for her years of dedicated service as a volunteer at the Hospital ECU...Despite hardship, racism and discrimination; she found dignity in friendship and liberty in hard work."

Later in life, Eva also fell in love with Jack Hanna, an American, who was a logger and a wrestler (he was known in the ring as the San Diego Kid). Together they went on to own and operate Quality Printers in Cranberry. The pair wanted to get married, but no minister in town would allow mixed marriages. They lived together in their house on Nootka street as common law partners.

YOUNG WRITERS GROUP DIVES INTO THE ARCHIVES
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Photo ID 2010.7.351: Brooks High School, Class, Division 1, 1933. Eva is in the second row, second to the left.