

local news

Villager's Book Details Struggles, Triumphs

Estella Shivers grew up in Nicaragua and dreamed of one day living among green grass and white picket fences.

By **TIM BRIGGS**
Daily Sun Staff Writer

Estella Shivers has endured plenty of tumultuous circumstances in her 72 years.

The Village of Bonnybrook resident was born in Nicaragua and withstood abuse as a child. She said she always dreamed about a better life.

At 9 years old, she traveled from Nicaragua to the United States by boat with her father and stepmother. Sixty-three years later, she wrote a book. "A Long Journey to the White Picket Fence & Green Grass" takes readers through her journey and ends with the life she always dreamed about in The Villages.

"One day I woke up and said to myself, 'I'm going to write



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Estella Shivers, of the Village of Bonnybrook, wrote a book about her journey through life titled "The Long Journey to the White Picket Fence & Green Grass." The book can be found for purchase on Amazon.

a book," Shivers said. "There are so many ups and downs in this book. I've been through a heck of a lot. From childhood in Nicaragua to coming to America, it tells my journey and how I went from a minus to a plus."

The book is the product of Shivers' commitment to creative writing, which began as part of the Creative Writers Group of The Villages.

The 188-page autobiography chronicles Shivers' childhood

in Nicaragua, the abuse she endured and how she managed to overcome it all. The story is made up of 53 chapters and begins with Shivers' birth as the fourth child in her family and ends with her move to The Villages. Thirty-eight photos highlight special moments and people in Shivers' life.

She learned that putting her past on paper helped her gain perspective.

"Living in Nicaragua as a child was very difficult," Shivers said. "I lived on Corn Island ... and I was given to my godmother, which is where the trouble began."

She said she went through the most traumatic moments of her life while living with her godmother and her godmother's husband from ages 6 to 9. Her siblings lived in other places while their father worked on the SS Constitution.

But Shivers said she didn't let her scars affect her, and she even learned to mend them.

She built a life for herself in America, living in Florida and

New York for the majority of her life. She worked at J. Henry Schroder Banking Co. as a banking assistant for several years and later moved into public relations at Stony Brook University Hospital.

She went on to raise three children and has been married to her husband, John, for 44 years.

She said she is proud of the way she raised her children — Eric, Lashonne and Kai-Yvonne — because she was able to give them the respect and kindness she went without as a child.

Now, Shivers said, she has everything she ever could want. She has the white picket fence and green grass for which she always longed.

"I feel I've accomplished a lot," she said. "In the end, I've been extremely lucky."

Her book can be found at amazon.com.

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