

Florida author to hold Tifton book signing

By **Latasha Ford**
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TIFTON — Author F. Diane Pickett of Destin, Fla. will be in Tifton Saturday for a book signing and reading of her book, "Never Isn't Long Enough." The signing will take place from 2 to 4 p.m. at Three Graces at The Lankford Manor, located at 401 Love Ave.

Born in Atlanta, 74-year-old Pickett grew up in DeFuniak Springs, Fla., where her vision and leadership inspired the revival

of the historic Florida Chautauqua Assembly. She said this came about due to intellectual curiosity after she moved back to her small hometown in the mid-1980s when she was 43 years old. She said DeFuniak Springs had fallen on hard times.

Pickett said she began to look back on its history and came to the realization that the town's past was also its future.

"And, its past had been glorious because of this thing called 'Chautauqua,'" she said. What began in 1884 near Jamestown, N.Y. as a summer religious camp later developed into a program that taught Sunday school teachers how to teach.

"In those days, the average person would go to Sunday school to read and write," Pickett said.

She said the program became "the forerunner of what we call adult community education."

"That summer program wouldn't accommodate everyone, so they found a place to do it in the winter," she explained. This is how the program migrated to DeFuniak Springs. However, the popular event folded when the train that people traveled by to get to DeFuniak Springs during that time was converted to handle troops during WWI. Pickett was able to revive the program in the 1990s, which is now in its 20th year.



PICKETT

She said she was inspired to write "Never Isn't Long Enough" after recovering from her last round of cancer. Her inspiration came from when she was at the beauty shop one day reading magazines about celebrities who weren't married but having a lot of children. She said this seems OK in today's society, but it wasn't that way when she was growing up. She thought she would tell stories from her generation, which help readers comprehend the growth of women's liberation.

Pickett said women from her generation married and were homemakers and mothers.

"This book is actually a family saga," she said.

"Never Isn't Long Enough" is written from the period of the Civil War through World War II. Pickett said there's a lot of history in the book. She said she did a lot of research.

"I tried to put the characters in the history of their time," she said, noting she talks about the

Civil War and the coming of the railroad and automobile.

Pickett said the characters are flamboyant and range from Alaskan adventurers to moonshiners and Ziegfeld Follies (dancing girls). There are also several love affairs.

"This book is about choices and how they affect not just your life, but the life of others," she said.

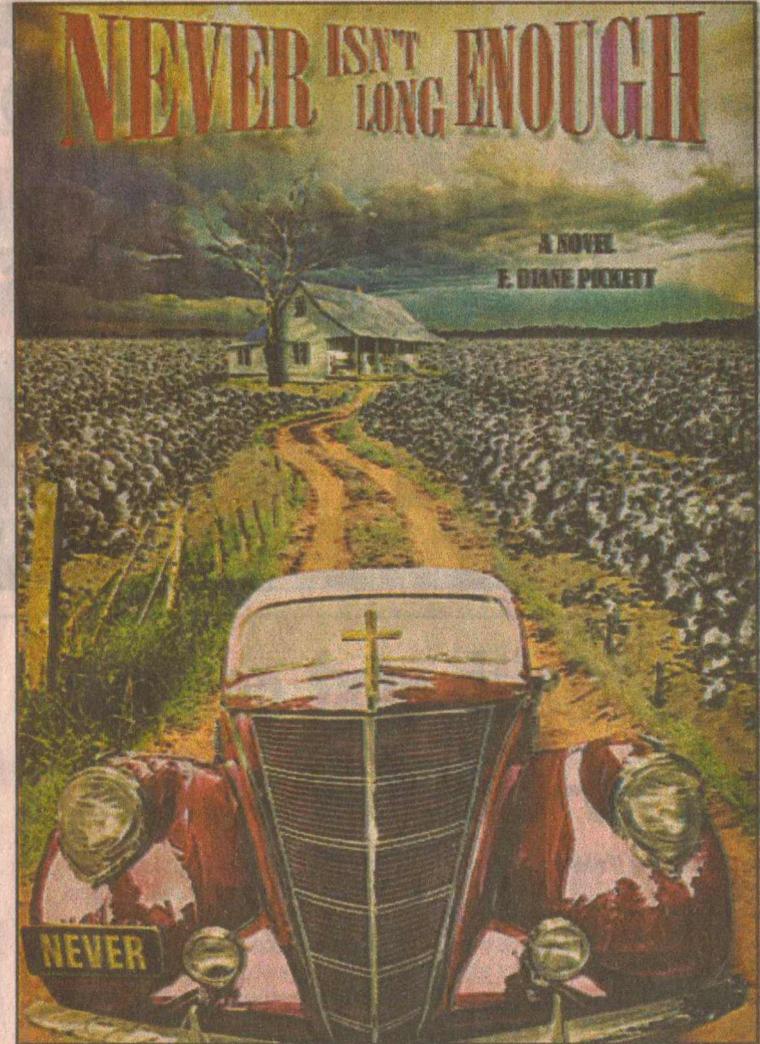
She also talks about farm life in her book, because she grew up in an agricultural community. She touches on the hard life people had on farms with no electricity.

Pickett said the book gives people a look at the south. It has something for men and women. She said those who have read her book say the amount of history is amazing. They don't notice that they've been given a lesson, because "it's so folded in the story."

"This is a humorous work of historic fiction," Pickett said. "It's a fun read. People say they laugh all the way through."

A book review in the "Beaches, Resorts & Parks" magazine about "Never Isn't Long Enough" states, "Written by a true southerner who knows her way

around the Derby, 'Never Isn't Long Enough' follows a field of flawed characters as they race through page after page of sparkling wit, drama, tragedy and conflict...featuring the doomed romance between a young farm girl and a wealthy older man called to God and commerce. This is the story of how a single mistake can turn the promise of youth into a lifelong quest for retribution."



Pickett said the book is set in the south, primarily Georgia. She noted she places her fictitious characters sometimes in Tifton, Americus and some in the mountains of north Georgia. She also used names of people she knew.

Pickett said it took four months to write maher book and she plans to write another one which will be called "Red Eye Gravy Trail." She said those who

know of any restaurants still serving red eye gravy can contact her at dianepickett0@gmail.com.

"Never Isn't Long Enough" can be purchased on Amazon as a paperback or an e-book.

At Saturday's book signing, she will read from her book and sign copies, which are \$13.95.

To contact reporter Latasha Ford, call 382-4321.