



Submitted photos
Sharon Gloger Friedman is shown here in 2019 signing copies of her first book, *Ashes*, at the 2nd & Charles store near the Mall of Georgia. Her debut book won the National Indie Book Award for Historical Fiction in 2019. Friedman will be signing copies of her latest book, *In Freedom's Light*, this spring.

LITERATURE

Hoschton's award-winning author releases second book

Story by David R. Altman

Well, it wasn't easy, but she's done it (again). Hoschton resident Sharon Gloger Friedman, whose first book, *Ashes*, won the Next

Generation Indie Book Award for Historical Fiction in 2019, has just released her second novel.

The new book, called *In Freedom's Light*, is a gripping story of Jewish immigrants fleeing persecution in Spain in the 18th century, only to find similar barriers here in the deep South as they arrive to the horrors of slavery in Charleston, South Carolina.

The book follows the journey of Efren Amselem, a Catholic, and his younger Jewish wife, Anica and their infant daughter Isabel. They barely escape Christian persecution before hiding away in a ship bound for Charleston.

Here is a passage: "Rising up on his elbow to face her, Efren began to cough. Searing pain creased his face as he struggled to get more air into his lungs. When the spasms that rattled in his chest finally subsided, he was panting and covered in sweat."

In the author's notes, Friedman wrote that the idea for *In Freedom's Light* came from a dinner party about three years ago when she met a young Catholic woman who had recently learned that she was of Iberian and Jewish descent.

She told Friedman about her great-grandmother's ritual of lighting candles on the Sabbath, which was continued by the woman's own mother and aunts, as long as she could remember.

That dinner set in motion the author's curiosity about "...descendants of Sephardic Jews



who were forced to renounce their faith during the Spanish inquisition." Friedman's research revealed that many of their customs were continued, even in secrecy, and that thread runs through the Amselem family's journey in *Freedom's Light*.

Friedman, a south Florida native and who has lived in the Deaton Creek community for 10 years, said this second book was not an easy one to write.

"It really did take three years to research and write," said Friedman. "Part of it was trying to write during the pandemic. I was easily distract-