

News Herald
TRACING PASTS

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Program tracks Bay families

Lifestyle

Genealogist Linda Pazics Kleback formerly was a researcher at the Bay County Public Library. She now lives in Maryland.

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Contributing Writer

Last week, I wrote about some of the fine work by the Bay County Genealogical Society. This week, I want to tell you about one of their newest programs: the First Families of Bay County Certification Program.

Many organizations sponsor pioneer programs, both on county and state levels. All involve proving descent from a pioneer settler in the area. The Bay County Genealogical Society's Web site www.rootsweb.com/~flbcgs/firstfamilies.html says the First Families program "seeks to identify and honor the first families of Bay County, recognize their proven descendants and promote interest in the rich genealogical heritage and history of Bay County."

It's wonderful to see a program to highlight Bay County's history. When we were working on Volume I of "The Heritage of Bay County, Florida," I found that many people thought Bay County was not a "historical" place. That isn't so, and I hope this program will help illustrate this.

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Applicants don't need to be current Bay County residents or even to have personally ever lived here. If they are descended from a Bay County settler, they just need to prove this by the standards adopted by the First Families Committee. These standards are designed to keep all established First Families and descendants accurately recorded.

The procedure for gaining certification involves preparing an application. Instructions and forms are at www.rootsweb.com/~flbcgs/firstfamilies.html

Forms are available in Word, WordPerfect and OpenOffice, and they can be filled out with your computer. There also are forms in a PDF format that can be printed and filled out by hand.

If you are descended from a Bay County pioneer, I hope you'll consider applying for a First Families of Bay County certificate. It's a wonderful way to honor your Bay County ancestors.