

Tracing Pasts: 'Wife Swap' searches for family who visits cemeteries

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By [LINDA KLEBACK](#)

Genealogist Linda Pazics Kleback formerly was a researcher at the Bay County Public Library. She now lives in Maryland. For an archive of her columns, go to

<http://www.newsherald.com/search/?q=Kleback&fstype=site&x=23&y=5>

Genealogists love cemeteries, and if you'd like to demonstrate that interest on TV, there's a chance coming up on the show "Wife Swap." The premise of the show is that two wives with differing values swap families for seven days. I learned on the Grave Mappers page on Facebook on March 4 (www.facebook.com/ext/share.php?sid=55344368350&h=DquPv&u=2pJ1d) that ABC is casting for their fifth season and want to find "families who love visiting cemeteries, plan cemetery crawls together and talk about interesting cemeteries! ... Families that appear on the show will receive a financial honorarium for lost wages, time and commitment. And if you refer a family that appears on the show you would receive \$1,000. Wife Swap is looking for a two-parent home with at least one child between the ages of 6 and 17 living at home full time. If you are interested, please send an email to the Casting Associate Producer, Amanda Gershkowitz at amanda.gershkowitz@rdfnewyork.com. Include your contact information and tell her a little about your family. Or if you would like to refer a family, send Amanda their contact information and she will be in touch." I can't quite imagine who the wife in this family will be swapping with, but it should be interesting.

Wives often challenge us as we research our families. Who isn't searching for the elusive maiden name of wives in their family tree? Since March is National Women's History Month, it's a good time to tackle those challenges again. There are lots of articles online about this kind of puzzle. A good one appeared this week in the free online newsletter Ancestry Weekly Discovery which has replaced the Ancestry Weekly Journal. "Finding Maiden Names" by Juliana Smith (<http://www.ancestry.com/learn/library/article.aspx?article=7281>) is a great short piece that covers a lot of possibilities. A Google search for maiden names also brings up a lot of articles that can help you track down female surnames.

I locate a lot of maiden names in obituaries and death certificates. Of course further research is needed since these items are not a primary source for maiden names, but getting a place to start is helpful. Deeds are also a favorite as are wills. In both of these a wife may have inherited property from her father who may be named. I have even found a deed that stated that the wife had inherited the land in question from her father that died without a will, and it even gave his date of death.

Maiden names can be a challenge, but some determined digging may solve the problem for you. And if any of you decide to try out for Wife Swap, let me know.