Locust Grove Receives National Recognition for Excellence

Historic Locust Grove has earned renewed accreditation from the American Association of Museums (AAM). Locust Grove is one of fewer than 5 percent of American museums to meet the association’s high National Standards and Best Practices. AAM Accreditation first was awarded to Locust Grove in 2000.

“By achieving re-accreditation, Historic Locust Grove has again proven it is, simply, one of the finest museums in America — providing invaluable educational and cultural service to the people of Louisville and the nation,” says AAM President Ford W. Bell.

Locust Grove is one of only five museums in Kentucky to achieve this recognition, and is the only one of these to hold the distinction of being a National Historic Landmark. The other AAM-accredited organizations in Kentucky are the Speed Art Museum, the Kentucky Historical Society, the Louisville Zoo, and the University of Kentucky Art Museum.

Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer believes that Locust Grove is one of Louisville’s historical treasures. “This important designation certainly affirms the tremendous effort and dedication that goes not only into preserving and protecting Locust Grove, but also in providing a high quality experience for visitors to this historic home,” says Mayor Fischer.

Kentucky’s District 3 U.S. Congressman John Yarmuth cites this accreditation as a major honor for Locust Grove. “It is yet another affirmation that these historic grounds represent more than just an interesting past, but also a promising future,” says Congressman Yarmuth. “In its educational and cultural offerings, Locust Grove proves itself at home among America’s top museums.”

HLG Board President Gwynne Potts adds, “Historic Locust Grove is proud to be recognized again as one of America’s excellent museums. Our work as managers of William Croghan’s Locust Grove is focused upon the expression of the professional standards associated with the AAM. We remain dedicated to both the interpretation of American history and the stewardship of this National Historic Landmark museum.”

American Association of Museums (AAM) accreditation is earned through a rigorous process of self-examination, peer review, and professional assessment. Locust Grove began several years ago to review every aspect of operations in light of the latest professional standards and best practices for museums in America. All museums — from large museums of art to the smallest county historical society — must meet the same standards. (See sidebar.)

“Our Board, volunteers, and staff worked together during the self-study period to bring our operations up to 21st-century expectations in areas from collections storage to security to interpretive programs,” says HLG Executive Director Dr. Carol Ely. “Last spring, a team of peer reviewers visited. After their report was reviewed by the AAM, we submitted a response to additional questions and concerns. Several months later, at the AAM’s accreditation meeting in March, we received our re-accreditation.

“We look forward now to fulfilling the promise that this honor represents,” adds Dr. Ely. “We will continue striving to bring the excitement of our nation’s history to the public in new ways, evolving as the world changes, and serving this community’s heritage for many years to come.”

Since 1906, the American Association of Museums (AAM) has been bringing museums together — helping to develop standards and best practices, gathering and sharing knowledge, and providing advocacy on issues of concern to the entire museum community. With more than 18,000 individual, 3,000 institutional and 300 corporate members, AAM is dedicated to ensuring that museums remain a vital part of the American landscape, connecting people with the greatest achievements of the human experience — past, present and future.

To receive accreditation, a museum must prove its excellence in these nine major areas of operation:

• Public Trust & Accountability
• Community Engagement
• Diversity and Inclusiveness
• Mission and Planning
• Leadership and Organizational Structure
• Collections Stewardship
• Education and Interpretation
• Financial Stability
• Facilities and Risk Management
Locust Grove recently received two very special gifts. The first is a fine miniature portrait of George Croghan, the second son of William and Lucy. The miniature was the gift of a descendent of the family who still resides in California, where George’s wife Serena relocated during the Gold Rush era.

In excellent condition, the portrait shows a man who has aged slightly since the time of his full-sized portrait that hangs in Locust Grove’s parlor. He is paler, with red-gray hair in place of the dark curls of the earlier image. His eyes are a nearly translucent gold instead of the brown that we expected. But the features are familiar. The artist is currently unknown, though we hope that research will uncover some possibilities.

Col. George Croghan has been in our thoughts lately as we plan our War of 1812 commemoration around his war exploits and the Ohio River as a reward for military service. This land was part of the 150,000 acres of land rewarded to General Clark and his regiment, the Illinois Regiment of Virginia, by the Commonwealth of Virginia for their service during the American Revolution.

This document is a gift to Locust Grove from members of the present-day Illinois Regiment of Virginia military re-creators—who are our partners in our annual 18th Century Thunder (April) and 18th Century Market Fair (October) events. We thank the Regiment and especially Tannya Holm, who spotted the document for sale (on eBay, of course) and spearheaded the fundraising drive.

We’ll display both the new miniature, along with other family portrait miniatures from our collection, and this new document along with others in our exhibit gallery this spring and summer.

A Colorful New World for Grove Gazette

Welcome to the new, full-color Grove Gazette! Locust Grove is in the process of updating all of its printed and online materials to better represent Locust Grove.

Our new logo, designed by Liz Swearingen, debuted last year. This year we are working with graphic designer Marilyn Mosch to redesign all of our publications. The colors being used are inspired by the bright, rich tones of William Croghan’s Locust Grove, as you see in the interiors of the historic house.

This issue of Grove Gazette—a collaboration among our designer, staff, and editors—is a milestone in the museum’s efforts to improve communications with our members. Locust Grove is most grateful to Lola Lighthipe, Ken and Mary Mauss, and Beth Thomas for donating their time to make this issue so exceptional.

Summer Antiques Market

SUNDAY, JUNE 24, 10:00 AM - 4:30 PM

This is the first of two semi-annual Antiques Markets at Locust Grove. Professional dealers from the South and Midwest will be displaying their wares. The show features formal furniture, books, textiles, jewelry, and silver. Admission is $6 ($3 for children 6-12). Admission includes tours of the historic house museum. Concessions are available. Proceeds support the continued operation and preservation of Historic Locust Grove.

Independence Day at Locust Grove

SUNDAY, JULY 4, 10:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Free to the public all day.

Last year’s popular hands-on workshop on “The Art of the Book” was so popular that we’re offering a similar workshop this year. It will include sessions on printing and binding, book arts, book repair, papermaking, and related arts. Please check Locust Grove’s website www.locustgrove.org for the schedule and fees. If you’d like to receive email announcements on this and all our special events, please send a message to join the list at info@locustgrove.org.

Book Arts Day Workshop

SUNDAY, JUNE 23, 11:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Locust Grove, 1100 Locust Grove Road, Shepherdsville, Ky., is a 1762 museum and educational facility dedicated to the history and culture of Kentucky. www.locustgrove.org

CALENDAR

First Wednesday Lecture Series

Locust Grove is committed to sharing the history of Kentucky with visitors and members through lectures and special events. Our lecture series offers a variety of interesting speakers and unusual topics that relate to the lives of the Croghans. Locust Grove’s Third Wednesday of each month from September through May, our lecture series features a variety of experts who will discuss a range of topics related to the history and culture of Kentucky.

The Discovery of Jeanne Baret

WEDNESDAY, JULY 4, 10:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Celebrate our nation’s Independence in the style of the early Republic. Bring a picnic lunch and enjoy the grounds of Locust Grove.

This month, the Audubons are visiting Locust Grove! Noted artist and bird lover John James Audubon will be in residence to circumnavigate the Comte de Bougainville’s expedition around the world. Dr. Ridley will discuss the life of this remarkable woman and explain the process of her diaries and maps in the exhibition. Her book will be available for purchase and autographing.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 11, 1:00 PM

NOTE: Since the first Wednesday of the month is July 4, the July Lecture will be the next Wednesday.

Why Quilts Matter: History, Art, & Politics

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Clarks, Croghans Subject of New Film

A film featuring the stories of the grown-up children of William and Lucy Clark Croghan is in production at Locust Grove and other locations in the area and commonwealth. This locally produced independent film is being headed up by director filmmaker Brent Humes and writer Brian Cushing. (Brian is also a weekend manager and costumed interpreter at Locust Grove, as well as a re-enactor with the Illinois Regiment.)

The script is based closely on transcripts of Clark and Croghan family letters as well as insights from experienced Locust Grove historians, including Gwynne Potts, Lynn Renau, and Dr. Carol Eh. At the center of the story are the years’ worth of “misadventures” (as they often were referred to in letters) of George Croghan and his often-strained relationship with his wife, Serena Livingston Croghan.

Figuring prominently into the story are the Croghan children — Dr. John Croghan, William Croghan Jr., Ann Croghan Jesup — Ann’s husband General Thomas Jesup, along with Lucy Croghan.

“We’ll see John Croghan exploring Mammoth Cave for the first time, as well as flashbacks to the 1813 Battle of Fort Stephenson,” says Brian. “Other events may be lesser-known. But we hope they will inspire interest in what happened at Locust Grove after George Rogers Clark’s death in 1818 and in the human side of these people whose names we know so well.”

William’s Wall Gets a Face-Lift

Locust Grove’s dry stone wall — encompassing hundreds of feet of massive dry-laid stone — was here when the builder of Locust Grove, Major William Croghan, was alive. Sometimes mistakenly called a “ha-ha” wall, it is more appropriately thought of as a retaining wall — less romantic but more accurate. The wall forms a level platform on which the house stands. The wall seems most impressive when approached from the west, up the Blankenbaker Road hill from River Road. A section of the wall near the southwest corner collapsed this winter, unable to withstand root and tree roots and time.

Enter the skilled artisans of the Dry Stone Conservancy of Kentucky in Lexington. This group is the only organization in the country devoted to dry stone masonry — keeping alive the skill, training and rebuild the 200-year-old dry stone wall on Locust Grove.

Preservation Kentucky has honored Historic Locust Grove Adviser Edie Bingham with its “Excellence in Preservation Education” award. Mrs. Bingham, a long-time historic preservation advocate, is known throughout Kentucky for her support of significant architecture and landscapes. She joined the HLG Advisory Council in 2010. Preservation Kentucky presented the award at its annual meeting in April, held at Louisville’s Whiskey Row Theatre and Gallery.

Woodworking Camp

Did you know that the wall on the south and west sides of the Locust Grove dates back more than 200 years?

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Jane Austen Festival Returns for Fifth Year

In their summer finery, with ruffled parasols and high bonnets. Gentlemen in waistcoats, cravats, and boots. Tea in flowered pots served with delicate iced cakes and tender scones. A marketplace offering fabrics, ribbons, books, and all manner of necessary items. On the weekend of July 21 and 22, the Jane Austen Festival returns to Locust Grove — transforming the grounds to the early 1800s when Lucy and William were living there. This annual event, now in its fifth year, is co-sponsored by the Louisville chapter of the Jane Austen Society of North America. Last year, 1,300 people came to Locust Grove from 18 states and Canada for the Jane Austen Festival. In addition to regular attractions such as afternoon tea and a Regency style show, other activities around the grounds include:

- Lectures: “A Dangerous Indulgence: Jane Austen’s Illness and Her Doctors” and “Austen-itis: Sickness and Health in the Novels of Jane Austen.”
- A Children’s Tea — the last seating on Sunday afternoon, with each child getting a cup and saucer to take home.
- A bare-knuckle boxing demonstration
- A one-woman theatrical performance, “Shame the Devil” by Kandy Fickle, a famous English actress who married an American, moved to the south, and became active in the early anti-slavery movement.
- A side-saddle demonstration
- A duel between gentlemen
- A tour of fencings
- A bare-knuckle boxing demonstration

So, volunteering at Locust Grove just seemed natural to Ted. Early doctor duties often had him leading school tours. One day, a teacher pointed to George Rogers Clark’s portrait, saying, “You look just like him.”

Ted Wright is this year’s Spirit Award Winner. He’s the Monday afternoon docent, serves on the Volunteer Steering Committee, and helps with many special events — both as himself and portraying General George Rogers Clark.

“Ted’s cheerful enthusiasm and big smile are some of the best things about Mondays at Locust Grove,” says Program Director Mary Beth Williams. “And having ‘The General’ on hand during our special events is such a plus.”

Five years ago, Ted responded to a newspaper article about Locust Grove needing docents. “I’ve always been a history buff . . . and Locust Grove is not far from my house,” he says. “So it just seemed to fit.”

The Louisville native spent his professional life as an industrial engineer working for a large manufacturing firm before forming his own company. In retirement, he’s become an avid genealogist. He and his wife also “dabble in antiques.”

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Gardeners’ Fair and Silent Auction

FRIDAY, SATURDAY & SUNDAY, MAY 11, 12, & 13
10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

This annual event offers visitors the chance to purchase flowers, herbs and plants, along with a variety of tools, artistic and practical gardening accessories. Among other delightful finds are wrought iron sculptures, water gardens, antique yard furniture and many other creative items.

The Silent Auction is a fundraiser for Historic Locust Grove, with scores of offerings from antiques, quilts and other handiwork to art, gardening accessories and valuable gift certificates.

General admission to the event, which includes a tour of the historic house museum, is $5, or $3 for children age 6 to 12.

Mother’s Day Brunch

SUNDAY, MAY 13
SEATINGS: 10:00 AM, NOON, & 2:00 PM

One of the most popular events at the Gardeners’ Fair is the Brunch — because of its high popularity and limited space, paid reservations are required. To make reservations call 502-897-9845.

Go to http://www.locustgrove.org/mothersday.html to view the menu.