

Spring 2020

## Exploring the Story of Locust Grove's Land

When Locust Grove announced on Friday, March 13 that we would be closed to the public for the foreseeable future due to COVID-19, a wise Facebook commenter wrote: "That house has seen many a time."

How poignant and how true. How do you tell the story of Locust Grove when the house, the outbuildings, and the Visitors' Center are closed?

Fortunately, Locust Grove is not simply a house, or a collection of furniture and portraits, or a handful of outbuildings. Its story rests not only in the lives and deaths of the individuals who peopled the site, but also with those who continue to care for its legacy today.

The story of Locust Grove is deeply tied to the land — once nearly 700 acres and now a respectable 55 acres. Locust Grove's Gardener **Sarah Sutherland** always has Locust Grove's cultural landscape in mind as she works.

Sarah says, "Imagine you were an early settler of this region in the 1770s and early 1780s, having received a military grant from Virginia Governor Lord Dunmore for your service in the French and Indian War.

"After a long trip either overland or by river, you would have found a fertile, rolling region — crisscrossed with creeks and animal trails and blessed with an abundance of springs that fed into the Ohio River. There were open meadows, bottomlands, and swamps in what is now Okolona and Fairdale.

"Even so, a good deal of land was heavily forested," Sarah continues. "Species mentioned as boundary markers in surveys from those early years include blue and black ash, sugar maple, birch, black walnut, tulip poplar, beech, sweetgum, buckeye, honey locust, common hackberry, and mulberry.

"Even before crops could be put in, the new landholder could live off the land — filled with bison, deer, bear, turkey, rabbit and squirrel. Fish were plentiful, and small berries could be found in wood edges and clearings," adds Sarah.

As new landholders in the early 1790s, William and Lucy Croghan would make their mark on this landscape. Their enslaved men cleared the land to build the main house and the outbuildings — including a kitchen, spring house, mill, dairy, smokehouse, cabins for the enslaved, and barns for the animals. Enslaved men, women, and children also planted formal gardens, built fences, and worked the fields of corn and wheat.

Some of the structures are still found on our property. But by the mid-1800s, much of Locust Grove's acreage was sold. Locations like the distillery and the mill now are buried in adjacent neighborhoods.

As you walk the grounds today, can you picture the landscape of the late 1700s? Can you sense the story of this land in the modern neighborhoods that have grown up around it?

Our house has been here since 1792 — and the land has been here for eons before that. We look forward to seeing everyone back again soon to continue the story.

*"At this 'rus in urbe' which I have in perspective, I will endeavor to unite the ornamental with the useful, the 'utile cum dulce.' I will have a considerable portion of the tract appropriate for the culture of the grape and those vegetables which bring the best market price. Thus between the improvement of my ground, my books, my practice I will be fully occupied and this is what the most of us require to make us happy."*

— John Croghan to his brother-in-law General T.S. Jesup, May 20, 1825

[www.locustgrove.org](http://www.locustgrove.org)

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The mission of Historic Locust Grove is to preserve and interpret the remaining 55 acres of William Croghan's estate, Locust Grove, with its circa 1792 house, outbuildings, collection, and grounds as examples of early 19th-century frontier America, and to share the stories of the many people who contributed to the history of the site, emphasizing the experiences of George Rogers Clark, Revolutionary War hero and founder of Louisville.

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## DIRECTOR'S LETTER Carol Ely, Ph.D.

### Locust Grove in the Time of Coronavirus



This is not where any of us expected to be at this point. As I write these words, on the first day of April, Locust Grove's buildings are closed up and I'm working at my kitchen table. The sun just came out, and the spring weather looks promising. And yet . . .

Maybe we should have expected this. Plagues and pestilences have been part of the human condition since before we were human. Viruses are in our actual physical makeup.

Locust Grove's people have been in this position before. Of the eight Croghan offspring who grew up at Locust Grove, two died of cholera (Eliza and George), and *four* died of tuberculosis (presumed John, plus Edmund, Charles, and Nicholas) which was pandemic in the early 19th century.

The cholera epidemic that took Eliza also raged among the enslaved people of Locust Grove and Louisville, with untold suffering as parents lost children and all lost loved ones — suddenly, painfully, tragically.

The grounds and gardens at Locust Grove are looking lovelier than ever. Our own staff and Metro Louisville Parks are looking after the site. The meadow is starting to emerge, the trees and flowers are starting to bloom, but the absence of people in the empty Visitors' Center and the sleeping historic buildings is eerie.

The staff has been active, communicating virtually through social media, YouTube, Zoom meetings, email, and nearly every electronic means that humans have devised.

Our Board, which had the foresight to set aside some reserve funds to get us through times like these, has been supportive of the staff and active in seeking longer-term solutions to the inevitable loss of income as our favorite events are postponed or cancelled, and with no tours, no rentals, no store sales.

We will get through this. We have before, although we won't forget those who were lost along the way. That's the way the world works, as history tells us, in this time of a plague upon the land.

I hope you are all well, and that we all make it through — together.

## Lucy Clark Croghan: 19th Century Mother

Kaitlyn Tisdale, Director of Education and Family Programs

We know Lucy as the wife of Major William Croghan or sister of Gen. George Rogers Clark. But she was so much more to Locust Grove. During this Mother's Day season, let's dive deeper into Lucy's role as a mother.

On a daily basis, she instructed the enslaved workers of their daily duties, coordinated dinners for prominent (sometimes Presidential) guests, and acted as her husband's deputy in his surveying business.

Lucy Clark married Major William Croghan during the week of July 14, 1789. As was frequently the case, Lucy became pregnant almost immediately after the wedding with their first child, John, born in April 1790. Lucy experienced eight more pregnancies over the next 15 years, delivering their last child, Edmund, in September of 1805.

Childbirth in early America was a difficult and often dangerous task for a woman. The birth took place in the home, with female relatives or neighbors close to the bedside and the assistance to the midwife, if one was on hand.

A long convalescence was not often a luxury many women could afford during the 18th and 19th centuries. Most women only had three or four weeks of recovery time before returning to their daily duties. With the number of children Lucy birthed, she would have most likely spent between 40-50 months recovering from childbirth between 1790-1805.

If Lucy nursed her own children (opting not to utilize a wet



nurse) for the first year of their lives, she would have breastfed for 96 months. The use of a wet-nurse, however, was very fashionable for women of wealth and status, particularly prior to bottle feeding and formula.

During this time, enslaved women and enslaved teenage girls were often used as wet nurses and caregivers throughout the early years of children's lives. Lucy probably changed very few diapers personally, as she always would have had two to three children in diapers at one time. Rather, she most likely had an enslaved woman to help feed, bathe, change, and clothe her children.

Between 1790 and well into the 1820s, Lucy's life was centered around running her stately home and farm and rearing eight of her nine children. (Her fourth child, Charles, born in 1796, died in infancy.)

Lucy was responsible for guiding her children's development – morally, educationally, and with needed life skills. She probably worked with the help of many others, such as tutors, teachers, and the enslaved caregivers her children would have known.

Looking at Lucy's motherhood journey by the numbers – she spent 81 months pregnant, survived nine births, raised eight children, and spent 48 years in motherhood. On Mother's Day, let's celebrate not only our own mothers, but also celebrate Lucy – creator of generations and the matriarch of Locust Grove.

## Welcome Back to Locust Grove, Kaitlyn Tisdale!



We're so happy to welcome back **Kaitlyn Tisdale**, our new Director of Education and Family Programs.

Kaitlyn graduated from the University of Kentucky and has a Master's degree from Western Kentucky University. She previously was an intern at Locust Grove, focusing on

collections. She joins us from the Culbertson Mansion State Historic Site in New Albany, Indiana.

Beyond that, Kaitlyn and her husband Ian became engaged in the spring house and were married in Locust Grove's gardens in 2016. They welcomed their son Owen in June 2019.

"I am most looking forward to getting to work again with our wonderful staff and volunteer corps," says Kaitlyn. "Locust Grove's events are great opportunities for us all to come together in support of Locust Grove."

Stay tuned for the new programs and opportunities that Kaitlyn will be dreaming up in her new role on Locust Grove's staff.



**Locust Grove Staff, Volunteers Stay A**

If there's a silver lining to this shutdown, it may be that we've all had a chance to think again about what's important. So often at Locust Grove, the staff members have to focus on planning our next event, our next tour, reporting on the last event. Now we have some time to look deeper, to do research, to tell the forgotten stories, and to appreciate again the objects in our collection and the beauty of the site.

**LEARN 19TH CENTURY SKILLS AT HOME**



**Sharron Hilbrecht makes candied citrus peel**

Make your own butter. Prepare candied citrus peel or wild violets. Create ink from berries. Dye eggs using onion skins. These are some of the activities you can do at home, thanks to a new educational initiative from Locust Grove.

"Lessons from Locust Grove" invites students of all ages to discover 19th century skills and activities with a new video each week. This new offering from Locust Grove is the brainchild of our new Director of Education and Family Programs **Kaitlyn Tisdale**.



**Kaitlyn Tisdale makes berry ink**

"These videos provide a hands-on activity that parents and children can do together," says Kaitlyn. "We hope this weekly activity fosters creativity and inspires learning — as well as offers a fun and engaging skills session during our region's current health crisis."

Each week's lesson covers a specific topic in a video taught by Locust Grove staff members or skilled volunteers — with each produced in their own homes. Accompanying each video is a worksheet available on Locust Grove's website that includes fun facts and several references for more information.

More videos to come include genealogy and family history, cursive writing and penmanship, and identifying plants and trees. "It's a fun and easy way for everyone to experience a bit of what life would have been like at Locust Grove — from your own home," adds Kaitlyn.

For all of the Lessons from Locust Grove, visit <https://locustgrove.org/lessons/>. If you would like to submit a lesson topic suggestion or to volunteer to record a lesson, please email Kaitlyn at [ktisdale@locustgrove.org](mailto:ktisdale@locustgrove.org).

**SPRING COMES TO LOCUST GROVE'S GARDEN**

Gardener **Sarah Sutherland** has been busy on the grounds at Locust Grove — weeding, mulching, planting and generally keeping watch on Spring's progress in the gardens.

"Gardening doesn't stop for a global pandemic! The quads had their annual edging and mulching last month (before things got bad), their first application of organic fertilizer, and now everything looks green, bloomy, and lovely!" she says.



"I've planted dahlia, canna indica, and double-flowering Mexican tuberoses after their winter hiatus in the basement of the Visitors' Center," she adds. "Three kinds of radishes are sprouting up — long black, round black, and yellow turnip-rooted are joining the Blue Pod Capucijner peas, walking onions, and Good King Henry and Swiss chard."

As part of the "work from home" movement, Sarah's porch is covered with seeded flats of herbs, flowers, and vegetables — watched over carefully by kitty "P. C." Sarah hopes to plant the seedlings soon in Locust Grove's beds. "Every few years, I need to propagate some of the seeds I save or else the stored seeds get too old and I lose that variety," Sarah explains.

She adds that volunteers can weed at Locust Grove without any human contact! She will give instructions from six or more feet away every morning except Thursdays. If you'd like to help her, email her at [ssutherland@locustgrove.org](mailto:ssutherland@locustgrove.org) beforehand so she knows when to expect you. Thanks!



**Find It Friday:** All of these things could be found in Dr John Croghan's office on the third floor of the house. Dr. Croghan was a doctor and the owner of Mammoth Cave. He studied diseases and cures of the day in an attempt to cure his own family of tuberculosis.

## y Active During Covid-19 Shutdown

We miss our community, our volunteers, and our visitors. But we're doing what we can to stay in touch through an amazing array of digital means.

When we are open again, nothing will be quite the same. Some of these new ideas that you see on this page will carry on. And it all can be even better for this bit of a pause.

## CALENDAR Spring 2020

At press time, we could not determine which of our planned programs would go forward. Please regularly check our website — [www.locustgrove.org](http://www.locustgrove.org)— or send your email address to [marketing@locustgrove.org](mailto:marketing@locustgrove.org) to get updated program information. Please stay safe and well.

### ONLINE FUN FROM LOCUST GROVE

There are many delights available at <https://locustgrove.org/lessons>, as well as on Facebook ([facebook.com/historic.locust.grove](https://facebook.com/historic.locust.grove)), YouTube (search for Historic Locust Grove), and other social media. Here are a few of the offerings:

**“History at Home” Scavenger Hunt** — A unique way for our followers to see their household objects as something more. Each clue leads to an item that may be otherwise overlooked — and allows our younger followers to see history in their own homes.

**In Jest with George Rogers Clark** — Interpreter **Matt Douthitt** is a frequent reenactor at Locust Grove and is on staff at Jefferson Memorial Forest. His 18th century jokes in character as George Rogers Clark bring a smile to our face, especially the one on April Fools' Day!



**“What Is It Wednesday”** — A weekly collections guessing game that asks our social media followers to identify collection objects found in the historic house and outbuildings based on only a close-up detail. Bonus points if you can also name where the object is found and how it is used!



**“Find It Friday”** — Similar to “What Is It Wednesday,” but this time you see the collections object and must identify the location of it, based on how it is used. For example, “Can you figure out where you'd find bark of morus rubra, carob beans, valeriana officinalis, and mango gum on our site?”



**Answers:**  
**What Is It Wednesday:** Staffordshire wash bowl, English c. 1820-1830. Currently located in the yellow guest bedroom on the second floor of the historic house.

### HISTORIC RECIPE: BRANDY SANGAREE

Program Director **Brian Cushing** has become an expert in “historic beverages.” One of his favorite sources is Jerry Thomas' *1862 Bartenders' Guide*. Brian has selected Thomas' “Brandy Sangaree” to share with Grove Gazette readers.

“Jerry Thomas was somewhat of a celebrity bartender in the mid- to late 19th century, and one of the first to write down the bartender's trade,” says Brian. “Originally published in 1862, many of the drinks he describes have an entirely different character from what cocktail drinkers enjoy today.”

Brian selected Thomas' Brandy Sangaree to remind everyone of brandy's importance in the distilling and spirits culture of the region from the early 1800s up until Prohibition. “When Prohibition was repealed in 1933, whiskey came back — but brandy largely faded from memory,” he adds.

**Alan Bishop** of Spirits of French Lick (Ind.) is one of Brian's distillery consultants. That distillery's revival of apple brandy is produced much as it was in the area during the mid-1800s. “When I use this brandy, I get a great idea of what the original cocktail would have tasted like!” says Brian. “It is like sipping velvet.”

#### Brandy Sangaree

##### Ingredients:

Your favorite cocktail glass  
1 tsp. sugar  
1 oz. (2 Tbsps.) room-temperature water  
Ice  
2 oz. (4 Tbsps.) brandy (apple brandy is best)  
1 tsp. Ruby Port  
Nutmeg (preferably freshly grated, but pre-ground is OK)



##### Directions:

Put the sugar and 2 Tbsps. of water in your glass and stir well.  
Option: Use 1/2 Tbsp. (or 1-1/2 tsps.) of simple syrup instead.  
Place two or three ice cubes in your glass, followed by the brandy.  
Mix well.  
Drop the port on top and allow it to filter through on its own (No need to mix here.)  
Grate or sprinkle the nutmeg on top.

**Enjoy!**

## Capital Campaign Nears Completion



Architects' rendering of pavilion

As readers of the *Grove Gazette* are aware, our Capital Campaign is wrapping up. We have been planning to start construction on the first phase of the campaign projects this fall.

After due consideration of the new circumstances of the world — **we have decided to start the construction around September as planned.** There will be disruption caused by construction layered over disruption caused by the virus.

But we will embrace chaos with creativity and good will — and have great new facilities and new programs by the spring of 2021. Surely by then, we will all be due some enjoyment and enlightenment!

## Thanks and Farewell to Beloved Supporters

**Frances “Frannie” Alden** led Locust Grove’s Acquisitions Committee for many years and served on the Board with dedication and grace. She contributed generously to every campaign, including giving a major gift to our Capital Campaign. She was a willing volunteer in every aspect of the site’s operations, a wise advisor, and an all-around lovely and kind lady. Her health did not permit her to be active in recent years; but she watched and cheered us on from home. We will miss her spirit and enthusiasm and advice.

**Bob Pilkington** was a legendary storyteller. For more than three decades, Bob brought to life the exploits of General George Rogers Clark and William Clark for Locust Grove visitors fortunate enough to take one of Bob’s tours.

In World War II, Bob fought in the Battle of the Bulge, was a

POW, and received the Purple Heart. In 1951, he joined the fledgling WHAS-TV in Louisville as a producer, director, and writer — notable for *Hayloft Hoedown*, *T-Bar-V Ranch*, and numerous local and regional documentaries. He volunteered for the WHAS Crusade for Children for 66 years.



In 2004, Bob received Locust Grove’s Audrey Pilkington Exemplary Service Award — named for his late wife in recognition of her pioneering work and positive energy in nurturing Locust Grove’s volunteers. Bob was instrumental in developing Locust Grove’s sterling first-person interpreter corps.



## SPIRIT AWARD WINNER: Ian Bryant

Volunteers are the life and heart of Locust Grove. Enthusiastic volunteers provide the vital energy and support essential for successful activities. They also pitch in to help with chores around the property and the upkeep of the historic site.

More than a year ago, **Ian Bryant**, a home-schooled high school student, called Locust Grove to see if he could help out in the gardens. Gardener **Sarah Sutherland** immediately took him up on the offer.

Ian has proven to be an enthusiastic and incredibly reliable young man — which is why he’s been selected by Locust Grove’s Volunteer Steering Committee as this quarter’s Spirit Award Winner.

Along with Bible doctrine studies, Ian’s other favorite subjects are history and biology. Working in Locust Grove’s gardens, which are filled with historic plants, was a perfect fit.

“The first thing I helped Mrs. Sutherland with was the herb garden,” says Ian. “It gave me a chance to learn more about the growing and use of the kinds of medicinal plants that were popular during the life of General George Rogers Clark and the Croghan family.”



But Ian didn’t focus solely on the herb garden, much to Sarah’s delight. “Ian now has done everything from weeding and cutting back plants to pruning and hauling wood,” Sarah says. “He’s even helped out with Locust Grove’s Used Book Sale.”

It’s hard to keep Ian out of a garden. “I enjoy working the garden I’ve created in my family’s back yard,” he says. He’s now working hard to get his garden cleaned out, mulched, and planted.

Sarah is delighted to have been working with Ian — both because of his exemplary work ethic, his reliability, and his flexibility. “Plus, he’s great fun,” she adds. “Sometimes he’ll just break out in song!”

Sarah adds that she’s always ready to welcome volunteers like Ian to Locust Grove’s gardens. If you’d like to help out, please send an email to Sarah at [ssutherland@locustgrove.org](mailto:ssutherland@locustgrove.org).

## DONATIONS RECEIVED FROM JANUARY 16 THROUGH MARCH 31, 2020

Many thanks to the hundreds of people who support Historic Locust Grove through memberships and various kinds of donations. We depend upon and deeply appreciate your generosity and involvement.

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### IN MEMORIAM

Frannie Alden  
Bob Pilkington

We note with sadness the recent deaths of these members of our Locust Grove family. We treasure their generous contributions to Locust Grove of time, energy, support, and enthusiasm.

## We Need Your Support in the Time of Coronavirus

Like all nonprofit organizations nationwide, Locust Grove has lost a significant part of our income with the cancellation of events and the closure of the site.

Each month that we are closed to the public is a loss of about \$35,000 — and our reserve funds are limited.

We have launched a fundraising campaign to close this gap, beginning with pledges from our Board.

If you are in a position to donate to help support Locust Grove, we are grateful. You can give online here: — <http://bit.ly/locustgroveannualfund> — or send a check to us at 561 Blankenbaker Lane, Louisville, KY 40207.

Thank you so much for your support.



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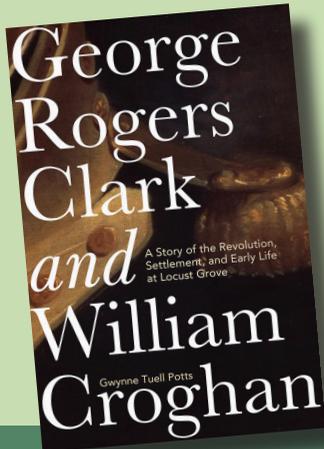


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Spring 2020

SPRINGTIME AT LOCUST GROVE!



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