

# HISTORIC LOCUST GROVE GROVE GAZETTE



## Newly Acquired Letter Reveals Insights Into Croghan Family Life

Last month we were fortunate to be able to purchase a newly discovered 1823 letter from Ann Croghan Jesup, William and Lucy's older daughter, to her recently widowed mother at Locust Grove. This letter is one of a group of Jesup letters that had been overlooked in a dealer's collection.

Letters from the adult Croghan children tell us a lot about family relationships, the Croghans' position in the social and political structure of Kentucky and the nation, and the lives of the many people who were part of the household. From this September 1823 letter (which will be on display in our gallery document display case in August), we also learn a tantalizing fragment of information about the enslaved individuals who were so much a part of life at Locust Grove.

Ann Croghan married well. Thomas Sidney Jesup was a rising star in the military/political establishment of early 19th century Washington, a hero of the War of 1812, appointed a Brigadier General, and the Quartermaster General of the US Army. The young couple lived in Georgetown, part of the new capital city.



In this 1823 letter, Ann describes her social world, telling Lucy about a tea party which causes her some anxiety because it is her very first hostess effort. But, she triumphantly reports, "I never saw as gay a party. Old & young enjoyed themselves & stayed to a very late hour."

Being a skilled hostess was Ann's job as the wife of a high-ranking officer. She comments on her efforts to keep the skills she has in music, urged on by her husband to continue with piano lessons. She tries to keep up with her French.

At the age of 28 she has already acquired some cynical worldly wisdom: "Most of the great men become very little when you know them." She describes predatory mothers seeking to set their daughters up with suitable beaux, in a manner that would be familiar to Jane Austen.



The purchase of Ann Croghan Jesup's letter was donated by long-time docent **Bob Pilkington.**

She misses Lucy, telling her that she reads her letters until she knows "every word by heart."

Finally, a significant part of the letter comes at the end, with Ann's news of the slaves that she has brought to Washington from Locust Grove, David and Rose. "David says he is very much mortified that none of his friends have written to him. Why does not Black Charles send him a few lines?" David and Charles were literate!

This letter is evidence that the people enslaved at Locust Grove were able to get at least the rudiments of an education, and were not discouraged by the family in this skill. It was not illegal in Kentucky to teach slaves to read, and this is proof that some of the enslaved were able to communicate with absent family and friends, a rare possibility for most in that world. We hope that more letters to and from Ann and the rest of the family are as charming and revelatory.

Though her letter is full of gossip and she ridicules old and young, men and ladies alike, she feels that she must assure Lucy of her manners. "You must not think my dear Momma that I ever make remarks of any person. I never do."

Ann is a conduit for news about Kentucky to Washington. She reminds her mother "always let us hear of Mr. [Henry] Clay's health, we are asked so often." Clay, the Speaker of the House, was about to begin his run for President.

But this social scene was only part of Ann's life. She was a young mother, with her first child, daughter Lucy Ann, less than six months old. Her description of the teething baby is very familiar: "She

is now sitting on the rug with her foot in her mouth. ... I can't keep her feet out of her mouth."

We read Ann's letter for clues about Locust Grove. Her affection for her family stands out. She mentions brothers Nicholas, Charles, John, and William and sister Eliza.



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561 Blankenbaker Lane (502) 897-9845  
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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.**

**It's a time of change at Locust Grove.** On June 20th, the Locust Grove community came together to honor and thank **Gwynne Tuell Potts**, who has just stepped down after five years of service as the President of the Board of Historic Locust Grove.

Gwynne has been an active part of the governance of Locust Grove for more than a decade, following years of volunteer and professional service, researching and writing our history, and so much more.

She's not leaving, but rather transitioning to work on projects of her choice. She'll serve on our Master Plan committee — and then, the possibilities are wide open. It is not goodbye.

But it was great to see so many friends turn out to eat chocolate and drink bourbon (her favorites) in her honor, nibble on fabulous hors d'oeuvres from Farm to Fork catering, listen to the Highland Chamber Players, and hear a few speeches. Thanks to docents **Bob Pilkington** and **Shirley Dumesnil** for their witty and kind remarks.

For Gwynne, it's always all about what's good for Locust Grove. So to entice her to agree to show up at the event in her honor, we decided to assure her that it was really a fundraiser. We established a new fund, the **Gwynne Tuell Potts Research & Education Fund**. Its goal — to support and promote research about George Rogers Clark, the Croghans, and Locust Grove. Attendees at the reception all gave a donation of some amount to the Fund in honor of Gwynne.

To date, we've received more than \$13,000 for the Fund, surpassing our most optimistic expectations. It's gratifying to know that so many generous folks agree that the best way to thank Gwynne is to support the research that will let us tell better, more nuanced, more interesting, and more accurate stories about the life and times of Locust Grove and the people who have lived here.

Thanks to all who have given. And it's certainly not too late to join the list of donors. Just send a check made out to "Historic Locust Grove" and note on the check that it's for the "Gwynne Potts Fund."

This Fund and the work that it will support will be part of Locust Grove forever. And it would not have been possible without the inspiration of Gwynne Tuell Potts.

Thanks, Gwynne, from all of us.

**Welcome to Our New Board Members**

**Sally Van Winkle Campbell** — environmentalist and author of books including *But Always Fine Bourbon*, and *Saving Kentucky*.

**Chris Morris** — Master Distiller, Brown-Forman's Woodford Reserve, and a past Board member of Locust Grove.

**Preston Thomas** — retired physician, returning to the Board for another term and serving as Board Secretary.

**Robert Vice** — Attorney with Reed, Weitkamp, Schell & Vice and a member of the Metro Landmarks Commission.

**Betsy Wall** — interior designer and Vice President of Design for Bittner's.



**Gwynne Tuell Potts**

*Carol Ely*

**First Wednesday Lecture Series**

Our lecture series offers a variety of interesting speakers and unusual topics that relate to the lives of the Croghans, Clarks, and the region. Lectures are held on the first Wednesday of each month, except for January and May. Desserts and beverages are served at 1:00 p.m., with the lecture immediately following. Admission is \$5 — or \$3 for Friends of Locust Grove.

**Bluegrass Renaissance: The Athens of the West**

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1 PM**

**Dr. James Klotter**, Kentucky state historian and professor of history at Georgetown College, will take us back to the era between Kentucky Statehood in 1792 and the death of Henry Clay in 1852. During those years, Lexington and its environs were often regarded as a place of culture and refinement that had grown out of its frontier roots. Yet the bright promise failed. Dr. Klotter has answers to how and why this happened



**Louisville Dulcimer Society: Music of the Season**

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 1 PM**

Hear about the findings revealed during recent archaeological digs on Locust Grove's lawns and fields from **Anne Bader**, principal project investigator with Corn Island Archaeology. Anne will describe the systematic archaeological survey of the entire property conducted last summer and reveal some of the fascinating information that helps to enhance our knowledge of Locust Grove and its residents.

**George Croghan: Fallen Hero:**

Temporary Exhibit in Visitors' Center Museum Gallery

**AUGUST 1 — SEPTEMBER 19, VISITORS' CENTER HOURS**

Lucy and William Croghan's second son, George, was the only member of his generation of the Croghan family to follow a military career. But the heroic Revolutionary generation of his father and uncle, George Rogers Clark, had left a legacy that was difficult to follow. The young Croghan's early brilliant success at the battle of Fort Stephenson in 1813 was followed by years of failure and disgrace.



Learn about the military and family life of Col. George Croghan, presented through family artifacts and memorabilia and private and public documents. Admission to the Exhibit Gallery only will be \$4; the Gallery is included with a regular tour of Locust Grove. Admission is free for "Friends of Locust Grove" members.

**Summer Used Book Sale**

**MEMBERS-ONLY PREVIEW, THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 5 PM — 7:30 PM**  
**FRIDAY, AUGUST 23 — SUNDAY, AUGUST 25, 10 AM — 4:30 PM** See back page for details.

**Sgt. Charles Floyd Day**

Mary Ellen McKenzie is thrilled to receive a copy of the "Charles Floyd Day declaration from Kentucky's Governor Steve Beshear



**TUESDAY, AUGUST 20, 12 NOON—4 PM**

Presentations and speakers celebrate the life and commemorate the anniversary of the death of Louisville's Charles Floyd, the only member of the Lewis & Clark Expedition to die on the journey. Because of the efforts of 11-year old **Mary Ellen McKenzie**, this day has been proclaimed by Kentucky's General Assembly as "Charles Floyd Day." Locust Grove is a stop on the Lewis & Clark Trail, and the only remaining structure on the Trail to have hosted both explorers. Check our website: [www.locustgrove.org](http://www.locustgrove.org) for further details and schedule of activities.

**The Bourbon Bookcase**

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1 PM — 4:30 PM**  
See page 4 for details.

**Collecting Kentucky**

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10, 7 PM — 8:30 PM**  
See page 4 for details.

**The Old Fashioned:**

An Essential Guide to the Original Whiskey Cocktail

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 5:30 PM — 7 PM**

**Joy Perrine** and **Susan Reigler**, authors of the Kentucky Bourbon Cocktail Book, will demonstrate the art of mixing the Old Fashioned, the bourbon-based cocktail said to have had its origins in Louisville. In addition to the well-known version made with muddled fruit and bitters, Joy and Susan will introduce participants to some modern variations on the drink. Tastings of all drinks are included.



Autographed copies of both Joy and Susan's book and of Louisville Chef Albert Schmid's *The Old Fashioned: An Essential Guide to the Original Whiskey Cocktail*, will be available for purchase. Admission is \$35; \$25 for Friends of Locust Grove.

**Fall Antiques Market**

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 10 AM — 4:30 PM**

This semi-annual Antiques Market features professional dealers from the South and Midwest displaying their wares on the lawn at Locust Grove. In addition to American country antiques, the show features formal furniture, 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 Locust Grove.





## Meet Susan Reigler: New HLG Board President

We welcome **Susan Reigler** as the new President of the Board of Directors for Historic Locust Grove.

Little did she know as a young girl, looking out her bedroom window, that she would one day be responsible for the future of the old farm house and grounds that were being restored across the street from her new family home.

As a teenager, she became a docent at Locust Grove and an on-site naturalist. After she returned from getting her Master's degree in Zoology at Oxford University, she lived in the log cabin at Locust Grove as the caretaker. Since 2010, she has been an active member of Locust Grove's Board of Directors.

Her name may be familiar to you from her 15 years' work at *The Courier-Journal* as the newspaper's restaurant critic and its science and travel writer. Currently, Susan teaches Biology and Music at Indiana University Southeast. She is the resident biologist at Blackacre State Nature Preserve and somehow finds time to serve on the Board of Directors of Bourbon Women. She also plays the trumpet for the IUS Orchestra and is the solo tenor horn for the Commonwealth Brass Band.

Susan is a prolific writer with numerous books and articles to her credit. Her most recent book is *Kentucky Bourbon Country – The Essential Travel Guide* (University Press of Kentucky, 2013).



## Noah Hiner Takes George Rogers Clark to Smithsonian

In June, middle school student **Noah Hiner** found himself teaching visitors and staffers at The Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C., a thing or two about George Rogers Clark.

His National History Day exhibit was selected to represent Kentucky at the Smithsonian from the eight projects by Kentucky Junior Historical Society (KJHS) members that were chosen for the national competition.

Noah became interested in Clark as a part of his volunteer activities at Locust Grove. He wondered why history seemed to have forgotten this hero of the Revolutionary War. "I discovered Clark's role in history was overshadowed by his postwar misfortunes," says Noah. "The most fascinating thing I learned throughout my project was how easily someone can be written in and out of history."

He was surprised that so many visitors — and even several Smithsonian interns and curators — didn't know who Gen. Clark was. "It was really satisfying to be able to enlighten them," he adds.

Locust Grove is the sponsor of the Louisville chapter of the KJHS. Three of those eight Kentuckians who went to nationals are associated with Locust Grove — **Kevin Combs** (senior individual performance), **Julia Bache** (senior individual paper), and **Noah Hiner** (junior individual exhibit).

### In Memoriam Barbara Collis Rodes

We note with sadness the recent death of this member of our Locust Grove family. We treasure her generous contribution to Locust Grove of her time, energy, support, and enthusiasm.

## Locust Grove Awards Three Prizes in the Spring Photography Contest

Throughout April, Locust Grove invited photographers to take photos around the buildings and throughout the property. Three photographs stood out — and won the \$50 cash prize each.

Locust Grove's gorgeous lilacs that line the path between the garden quadrants starred in the photo from **Jeannie Litterst Vezeau**. The delicate flowers contrasted with the bark of a nearby tree, as softly focused dogwoods and the house fade into the background. Her photo won in the "Adult—Landscape" category.

The charming photo of Locust Grove's stone springhouse, surrounded by the spring-green foliage and glowing warmly in the sunlight, won the prize for **Julia Goodin** in the "Youth" category.

**Karen Riebel Kelley** won for her stunning photograph of the long shadows on the east meadow, with the split-rail fence in the foreground and the historic house and out-buildings behind. Karen won first place in the "Adult—Buildings" category. See her prize-winning photo on the back cover.

Congratulations to the photographers for capturing the beauty of Locust Grove in the spring.



Adult Landscape Category — Jeannie Litterst Vezeau



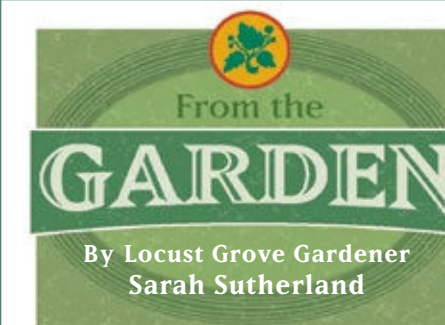
Youth Category — Julia Goodin

## Volunteers Get Exclusive Tour of Historic Oxmoor Farm

Behind busy Oxmoor Center mall in eastern Jefferson County is a beautifully preserved home dating to the late 1700s — complete with a garden, historic out-buildings, and beautiful rolling fields. The site, previously owned by the Bullitt family, represents more than 200 years of family occupation in a single place. Locust Grove volunteers learned about the family papers, objects, and landscape associated with Oxmoor Farm and the Bullitt family that are now



entrusted to The Filson Historical Society. Host **Shirley Harmon**, archivist in charge of Oxmoor Farm, pointed out what a great treasure this is — offering a tremendous resource for scholarship and learning about life in Louisville and the Ohio Valley region from the 1780s until the present.



We've started an exciting new project this summer at Locust Grove — a "Slave Garden." In early America, many enslaved workers were given a small plot to cultivate for their own use — either to feed themselves and their families or to produce crops to trade or sell. Of course, all of the work of planting and cultivation had to be done after the master's work was completed, an exhausting regime. Having the enslaved raise their own food saved money for the master. But it also gave slaves some control over their diet and a chance to choose some of their own traditional foods.

Our Slave Garden is enclosed by a typical fence made of hazelnut poles woven with tree and shrub trimmings. The enslaved African-American population would have used whatever was at hand. We're growing asparagus, carrots, custard squash (a creamy patty pan), corn, okra, tronchuda (a non-heading cabbage/kale), poplar root sweet potato, and our old favorite, the Purple Calabash tomato. These are heritage plants that would have been grown by the slaves.

This small plot, located near the grape arbor in the long planted rows east of the quad gardens, will remind visitors of the presence of the enslaved workers who grew *all* of the crops at Locust Grove, both for the Croghans and for their own families.



## Spirit Award Winner: Patricia Klinck

Patricia Klinck's love of American history — especially the Colonial period — was practically bred in her. The Connecticut native is descended from three Colonial governors in Connecticut. Her early years were spent in an 1838 Greek Revival home near Hartford, Conn., where her father was an editor at *The Hartford Courant*, one of the nation's oldest newspapers.

She says that Locust Grove's "very walls echo with the exploits of Revolutionary War-era patriots." So it's not surprising that when the late "Ace" Elmore encouraged her to join him as a docent at Locust Grove some 17 years ago, she answered the call.

Patricia has been a strong supporter of Locust Grove — leading tours every other Sunday afternoon, helping at countless special events, and serving for many years on Historic Locust Grove's board. For these and many other reasons, Patricia has been named this quarter's Spirit Award Winner.

"Patricia represents everything that Locust Grove's founding volunteer corps sought in the museum's interpretive staff," says outgoing HLG Board President



**Gwynne Potts.** "She's prepared, enthusiastic and professional in all of her visitor interactions. As a board director, she brought those qualities and more — a conscientious deliberation concerning her responsibilities and an earnest desire to do the right thing."

For eight years, Patricia headed the Emilie Strong Smith Chamber Music Concert

committee — a program that allows visitors to hear music in the Great Parlor of the historic house, much as the Clarks and Croghans would have. For those many years, Patricia and her husband **Dan** greeted guests and made sure the glasses of wine and sherry were ready for the attendees.

"After all the guests had ascended the staircase, we would swing into action, clearing away all traces of the drinks and snacks," Patricia says. "Only then did Dan and I join the audience for its evening of delightful music."

Patricia relinquished her post as chair of the Chamber Music committee after the last concert in April 2013. But it's a sure bet that she and Dan will continue to be supporters and regulars at the concerts.

"Patricia and Dan's commitment and passion for this program has helped to ensure its current and future success," says **Mary Beth Williams**, Locust Grove's program director. "I am so appreciative of the countless years Patricia has dedicated to Locust Grove."

## Locust Grove Costumed Interpreters Gearing Up for Revamped Christmas Event

Locust Grove's costumed interpreters program is undergoing some exciting changes. We have a new year as the setting, some new interpreters, and historically accurate costumes.

Our popular living history program is now interpreting the year 1816 — which allows our costumed interpreters to discuss "recent" events such as the arrival of the first steamboat to Louisville in 1811; the New Madrid earthquakes of 1811-1812; George Croghan's victory at Fort Stephenson during the War of 1812; Indiana's 1816 statehood; and the election of President James Monroe that year.

As part of this revamped program, our cast of costumed interpreters attends regular workshops and rehearsals throughout



Costumed Interpreter **Clare Egan** works on her shift — her first-ever sewing project.

the year. These workshops focus on the history of the period, the Croghan and Clark families, costuming, period language,

manners, deportment, and techniques of improvisation.

Outside experts are sharing their knowledge and expertise with our costumed interpreters so we can continually improve our interpretation. At a recent hands-on sewing workshop, interpreters worked to create a shift — an essential part of a woman's 19th century costume.

The premiere event for our new troupe of costumed interpreters will be the rebranded "Christmastide" event which will take place in the afternoon and evening of December 13 and 14. Look for further details and a description of this exciting, new interactive event designed to put you in the holiday spirit — 1816-style — in the next issue of *Grove Gazette*.

## Thanks to Our Recent Donors

### Donations received from March 23 through June 30, 2013

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A HEARTY "THANK YOU" TO ALL OF THESE PEOPLE WHO RECENTLY JOINED OR RENEWED THEIR MEMBERSHIPS, AND TO ALL OF OUR LONGTIME FRIENDS OF LOCUST GROVE! IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BECOME A FRIEND, PLEASE GO ONLINE TO [WWW.LOCUSTGROVE.ORG](http://WWW.LOCUSTGROVE.ORG), OR CALL US AT (502) 897-9845 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND DETAILS.

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Historic Locust Grove  
561 Blankenbaker Lane  
Louisville, KY 40207  
(502) 897-9845  
www.locustgrove.org



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Karen Riebel Kelley's winning photograph in the "Adult-Buildings" category of the Locust Grove Spring Photography Contest. See page 5 for the other prize winning photographs.



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[SUMMER 2013]

The printing of Grove Gazette is contributed by Publishers Printing, Shepherdsville, Ky. Thank you!



### Summer Used Book Sale

**MEMBERS-ONLY PREVIEW, THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 5 PM - 7:30 PM**  
**FRIDAY, AUGUST 23 — SUNDAY, AUGUST 25, 10 AM - 4:30 PM**

*"If I have not read a book before, it is, for all intents and purposes, new to me — whether it was printed yesterday or three hundred years ago."*

If writer and essayist William Hazlitt (1778–1830) were alive today, he'd love Locust Grove's semi-annual Used Book Sales. There he'd find thousands of new-to-him books. And you can, too, when you come to Locust Grove's Summer Used Book Sale in August.

The Audubon Room in the Visitors' Center will be filled with more than 15,000 new-to-you books, ready to be discovered. Along with these used books, we'll have specially priced antiquarian and new books in all categories.

All of the books are sorted into nearly two dozen categories — history, art, literature, mysteries, reference, science fiction, travel,

cookbooks, children's, gardening, Kentucky/regional, crafts, and much more. Prices begin at \$1 for paperbacks (small and large) and \$2 for most hardcover books, with illustrated books, rare books, and special sets priced individually.

Every book at both of Locust Grove's semi-annual used book sales has been donated. We accept donations all year long at our Visitors' Center during museum hours. If you need help to pack and deliver your donations, just call us at (502) 897-9845 for assistance. And don't forget to pick up your tax-deduction receipt. All proceeds from our Used Book Sales go to support Locust Grove's educational and interpretation programs.

HISTORIC LOCUST GROVE  
**GROVE GAZETTE**