

Locust Grove – A Place for Discovery

For the past 228 years, lives have been lived, deaths have been grieved, structures have been built, and paths have been walked by the generations of Croghans, Clarks, enslaved people, the Waters family, restorers, visitors, and volunteers who have found a place at Locust Grove.

Even though we have been closed for a considerable part of the year, our buildings and grounds still tell our story.

The house, with approximately 150,000 bricks, was built by the hands of enslaved men who molded every brick and placed every floorboard.

In it, Lucy and William Croghan raised eight children. Enslaved workers like Chastian and Malinda waited on the women of the house. And here, enslaved guide Stephen Bishop drew a map of Mammoth Cave — a site he knew better than anyone else.

The kitchen, where enslaved cook Nanny worked, day after day, preparing meals and making sure there always was a fire for cooking, no matter the season.

The garden, where enslaved people like Criss worked. And today — thanks to the careful research by Locust Grove's Gardener **Sarah Sutherland** — you'll see plants, herbs, vegetables, and flowers that would be quite familiar to Criss.

The smokehouse — the only outbuilding original to the Croghan family — where the meats were salted, smoked, and stored so the people on the site were fed through the winter.

The icehouse, where enslaved workers kept cool all summer long the huge slabs of ice that they

harvested from farm ponds and streams.

The meadow, where native plants finally are beginning to flourish after several years of preparation. Here, the foundations of slave cabins still remain. We are finding new spaces to interpret and remember their lives.

The landscape of the Croghan farm has been carved up and divided until only 55 of the original 693.5 acres remain a part of our site. But these remaining acres are essential to shaping our story today, in 2020, as we face unexpected challenges and sacrifices.

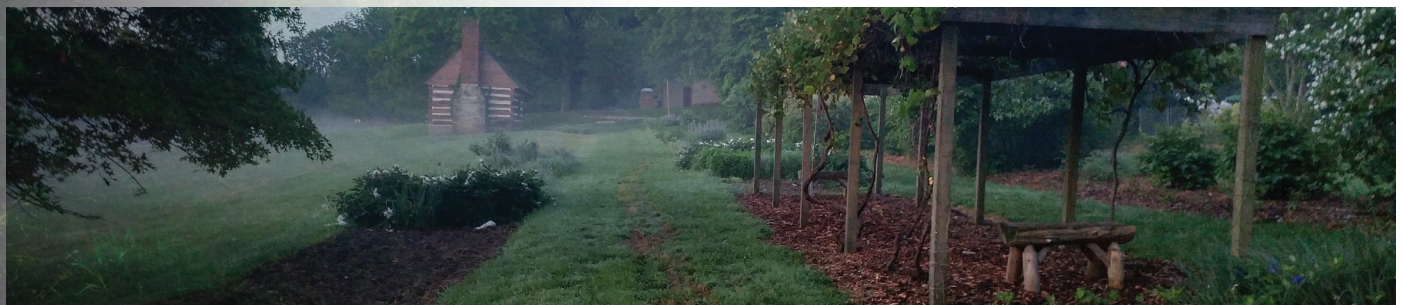
Locust Grove is the place where Louisville begins, yet it is more than that. It is the place where we begin to tell the stories that matter to our understanding of our lives and society today.

It is the place where we move beyond beginnings to continue research into all the lives who lived here, to continue reaching out to our community to find the past in the present, and to continue to rise to the challenge of relevance and renewal.

We know that these stories are important, that this place matters, and that it is essential to recognize all the people who lived, worked, and died in these spaces.

Inside this issue, on pages 4 and 5, we share the latest information we have on the enslaved community at Locust Grove, along with stories of some of those enslaved people.

Even if our doors are closed, we are open for discovery. We hope you can join us soon.



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www.locustgrove.org

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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Pictured on the cover: Sidney Edwards and Xavier Harris through the window; Tiara Thomas with churn.

DIRECTOR'S LETTER Carol Ely, Ph.D.

Locust Grove in the Time of Coronavirus

It seems as if time runs in many parallel paths now, with all the stages of facing and living through this pandemic happening simultaneously.

I'm writing this in late July. Though infection numbers are rising, Locust Grove is just about to resume tours and about to attempt a limited version of our book sale; while continuing to program virtual events and plan for fall and winter online; while also planning well ahead for operating in a post-pandemic world. And — trying to ensure that our funds can stretch to get us to that beautiful future. It can be dizzying.

But it is also energizing. As all assumptions are upended, new possibilities open. We learn and experiment with new methods of outreach, we learn new skills, we lean on old partnerships while discovering new friends. We've learned that digital allows us to reach further, and that colleagues are newly available to participate in programs from near and far. On Zoom, it doesn't matter if you present a Locust Grove lecture from just down Brownsboro Road (thanks, **Gwynne Potts!**) or from College Park, Maryland (thanks, **Richard Bell!**)

And now, the uprising for justice has opened new possibilities for dialogue within the community and added urgency to our mission. We just held the first meeting (postponed from last March, and Zoomed, of course) of our Task Force on Interpreting the Lives of the Enslaved. It is a great group of staff, volunteers, Board members, scholars, researchers, community members, and especially our corps of actors who have been working with us to literally embody the people enslaved at Locust Grove. Together we are finding real-world and virtual-world ways to tell their stories, to learn about their lives, to "say their names." You'll see more about our efforts in this issue of the *Gazette* and throughout the coming year.

Our members, donors, and volunteers have stayed the course with us, and we are grateful. Our budget is an issue — we face a huge shortfall this year with earned-income programs and rentals cancelled. While we are planning fundraising events and writing grants, we must rely more than ever on the support and strength of our community. So, yes, we'll be asking for a little extra from anyone in a position to give, during our fall annual appeal.

But — construction on the Pavilion starts this fall.

And the meadow bloomed at last!



Carol Ely

We Welcome 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.

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

Solving the Mystery of Floyd's Coat

Brian Cushing, Program Director and Historic Clothing Expert



One of the most eye-catching pieces in Locust Grove's collection is the fringed and beautifully decorated leather coat that hangs in the museum gallery. Locust Grove received it from Ann Mason Lee in 1964, saying that it had been handed down from her great-grandfather, John B. Floyd. He said that the coat was a gift to his father — another John

Floyd — from General George Rogers Clark.

This is a frock coat that features a European/American cut with Native American decorative techniques, showing the cultural fusion of the frontier. The body is made with a single seam at each side; the skirt is a separate piece; the sleeves and wrists are not particularly fitted; and the seam at the waist has a rounded shape. The shape of the waist seam on this coat was only becoming popular about the time that General Clark died in 1818.

When I looked closely at the construction of this coat, I saw it wasn't in line with the way men's coats evolved in the early 1800s. Frock coats with similar skirt lengths were not popular until after Clark's death — and the sleeve details date to even later than that. The details of our coat aren't apparent until the 1850s. But Clark died in February of 1818. So, what does that mean?

It's likely that the family story became confused because there were three consecutive generations of John Floyds — John Floyd (1750-1783) who fought with General Clark; his son John Floyd (1783-1837) who became Governor of Virginia; and *his* son John B. Floyd (1806-1863) who also was Governor of Virginia.

Since the innovations in the coat's construction date to several decades after General Clark's death, it could not have been given to the first John Floyd by Clark. The only time frame into which our Locust Grove coat fits neatly is that of the youngest John Floyd — the great-grandfather of our donor.

It's easy to imagine how a family story could become muddled over time, with three "John Floyds" in a row. And it seems only natural that such a romantic object would have been connected to the exciting story of the conquering of the Northwest Territory — in which a family member (the first John Floyd) fought alongside General Clark.

Thank You — and Farewell



Nina Ayers was a dedicated docent and enthusiastic volunteer for 17 years — involved in almost every aspect of Locust Grove's operations. If you visited us during any of our events, you'd most often find her at the door of the historic house — greeting guests and setting the stage for their visit.

She was here to teach almost every school group who got to taste the cornbread that Nina baked for most of the groups. She was a regularly scheduled docent and volunteered at nearly all our major events.

Nina counted and reported monthly volunteer hours and worked on our Used Book Sale committee for many years. During her several periods of service as the Chair of the Volunteer Steering Committee, she served *ex officio* on the Board of Directors.

"Nina was always the first to sign up for events and the last to leave," says Executive Director **Carol Ely**. "Nina seemed tireless and was fiercely loyal and protective of Locust Grove. We will miss her."

Carrider "Rita" Jones was an author, playwright, historian, and mentor to many in Louisville. We were fortunate to have Rita on the weekend staff from 2006–2010. She could always be counted on for insightful



observations and thoughtful care of all around her.

Rita was highly accomplished and leaves a legacy to the community — particularly through her work as co-founder of "Women Who Write" and through her research on the African American communities in Kentucky.

"Rita was a very positive, gentle, and thoughtful person, who loved history," says Carol. "She was very aware of people being treated with respect and fairness — herself and others — and advocated for everyone."

John Moses was Locust Grove's House and Groundskeeper for 10 years — and he seemed to take care of everyone. He could fix anything with just a zip-tie and a single screw. He always had the fire in the hearth kitchen ready for the cook on school-tour days. And the cook knew she always would have enough wood for the day. John was a committed environmentalist, collecting cardboard and plastic from the grounds and making sure it all would be recycled.



John took impeccable care of the historic house. "He was notorious among the staff for his stealth," adds Carol. "Swift and quiet, he managed to accomplish an amazing amount in the spaces in between his appearances."

Between 1792 and 1856, approximately 70 men, women, and children were enslaved by the Croghan family at either Locust Grove or Mammoth Cave. Locust Grove is committed to uncovering the stories of these individuals and sharing them with you. When we know their names, their presence comes into focus.

This is important work. It is necessary to tell the story of everyone who called Locust Grove home, even when it was not their choice.

At Locust Grove, we have been aware of the spaces and places occupied by the Croghans and their friends, neighbors, and guests whose names are familiar and famous to us now. And now, with the work of our researchers, the enslaved are becoming just as familiar.



Sidney Edwards, actor/interpreter

We can envision the enslaved workers' days from sunrise to sunset, ask questions about what they might have thought and felt about the activities of the house and farm, and assert the idea that their condition as property did not remove their inherent humanity.

Heather Hiner, a volunteer since 2012, has been the central researcher for discovering details about Locust Grove's enslaved population. It is thanks to her ingenuity and tenacity that we have expanded the list of names to the 70 names we know right now.

Using family letters, newspapers, account books, and census records, Heather has discovered the life story of Alfred Croghan, the first enslaved person owned by the Croghan family whose life can be traced from his childhood at Locust Grove to his death as a free man in Louisville.



Alonzo Brown, actor/interpreter

We can see how the enslaved changed hands between Croghan family members, as is the case with Isaac, Malinda, and Sylvia. We see the skilled work of Criss, who tended the garden; Little Bob, who worked as a barber; Uncle Jim, who worked at the mill and may have assisted with running the distillery; and Blythe, Kitt, Isaac, Malinda, and Rose, who tended to the personal needs of George Croghan, George Rogers Clark, Dr. John Croghan, Emilia Clarke, and Ann Croghan Jesup's children.

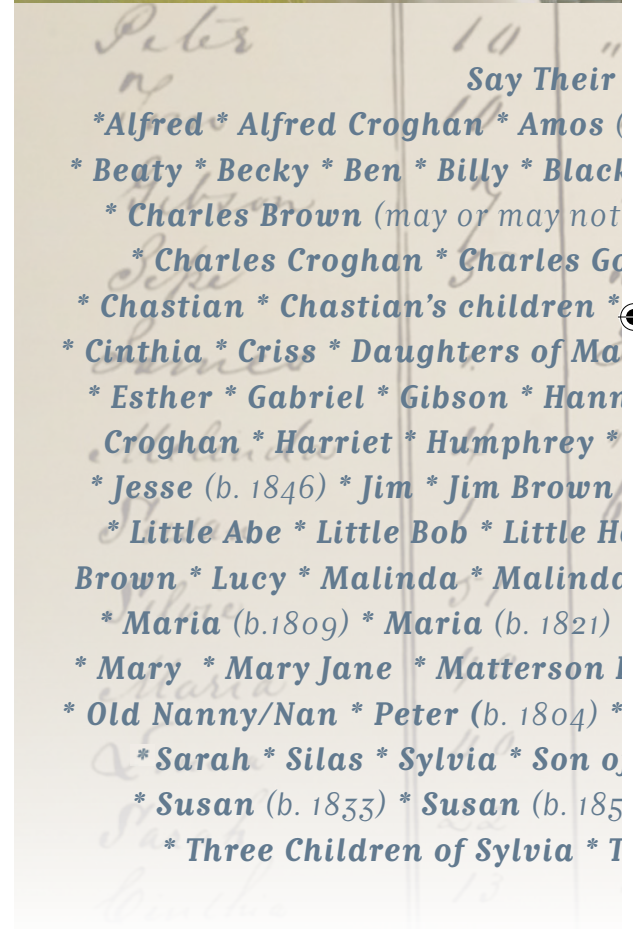
Interns including **Rebecca Wishnevski, Jill Dunagan, Kate Lamb, and Caroline Weikel** have built upon Heather's research by focusing on the material culture and daily lives of the slave. Using Locust Grove's archaeological collection housed at the University of Louisville, Rebecca helped create an interpretation plan for our new enslaved dwelling.



Caisey Cole, actor/interpreter

Other actors, interns, and performers have created original material based on of research — reimagining the lives of the enslaved at Locust Grove. They include **Lonnie Brown, Tiffany Caesar, Caisey Cole, Pattie Crawford, Sidney Edwards, Xavier Harris, and Tiera Thomas**. (Caisey and Sidney talk about Juneteenth and more here: <https://bit.ly/CaiseySidney1>).

We're in the process of transforming our former woodshop into a dedicated space to learn and reflect on the enslaved people's lives at Locust Grove. It's all a part of Locust Grove's ongoing quest of discovery.



Actors/Interpreters (from left) Tory Beckham, Asia Brimm, Gwen Evans, Th

Locust Grove's Enslaved Population



Their Names:

(d. 1798) * **Amos** (b. 1832) * **Anny**
ack * **Charles** * **Blythe** * **Bob** * **Celia**
 (not have been owned by Croghans)
 * **Goldman** * **Charlotte Croghan**
 * **Child of Beaty** * **Child of Susan**
Malinda * **David** * **Elinora Croghan**
annah * **Hannah Brown** * **Hannah**
y * **Isaac** * **James** * **Jesse** (b. 1804)
vn * **John Wesley Croghan** * **Lamb**
e Harvey * **Little Tommy** * **Louisa**
nda * **Malinda** (b. 1846) * **Margaret**
 (21) * **Mary** (b. 1794) * **Mary** (b. 1816)
on Bransford * **Nicholas Bransford**
 (4) * **Peter** (b. 1839) * **Rachel** * **Rose**
n of Harriet * **Stephen Bishop**
 (1850) * **Susan** * **Thomas Bishop**
 * **Tom** (b. 1825) * **Tom** (b. 1839)



ns, Theo Mackey

Chastian

Chastian is the first person whose name we know who was enslaved by the Croghans. Chastian and her children were owned by Lucy Croghan's father, John Clark, and were working for the Croghans at Locust Grove at the time of John Clark's death. Chastian and her children were left to Major William Croghan in John Clark's will of 1799. While we don't know when Chastian actually arrived at Locust Grove nor what her exact duties were, it is possible she came with Lucy when she married William to serve as a lady's maid or nanny. Her exact duties remain unknown.

Malinda

Malinda was an enslaved woman who was left to Emelia Clarke, wife of William Croghan's nephew, Nicholas Clarke, in Major William Croghan's 1822 will. Nicholas, Emelia, and three of their children lived at Locust Grove between 1809 and 1812 before moving into Louisville when Nicholas started the *Western Courier*. Malinda was most likely assigned to be a lady's maid to Emilia and to help with her children. Based on the 1820 census, Malinda and likely her two daughters moved to Louisville with the Clarks when they left Locust Grove.

**Note: There were three people at Locust Grove named Malinda who were enslaved by the Croghans.*

Isaac

Isaac was given to Eliza Croghan Hancock in 1829 when some of the enslaved people at Locust Grove were divided among the Croghan siblings per the 1822 will of their father, Major William Croghan. Isaac later moved to the household of Ann Croghan Jesup around 1833, and later to Dr. John Croghan around 1842. Isaac was present when John Croghan died in 1849. He was the only enslaved person who was freed outright in John's 1849 will.

Little is known about what happened to Isaac after he was emancipated. We continue to research in hope of learning about his life as a free man. Currently, the only possible reference found of Isaac after Dr. John' Croghan's death is a notice in the *Louisville Courier* in May 1849 stating that Isaac Croghan had a letter at the Post Office.

Nanny/Nan

Nanny was the enslaved cook at Locust Grove. We know very little about her outside of her vital role running the kitchen. We don't know how long Nanny ran the kitchen nor how many enslaved people she had to help her. It would have been a grueling job, with long hours to produce food throughout the day, clean up after meals, and ensure the fire was banked all night with coals to start the fire early the next morning.

In an 1825 letter, Dr. John Croghan writes that *"...Old Nanny officiates for me in the cooking department. I made some peach preserves, about two pounds I suppose, and with all due deference to my Mother's knowledge on this subject I think they excel that of her make."*

While John is bragging about his peach preserves, it is quite likely they were actually made by Nanny herself.

Nanny or Nan, was given to William and Lucy's son Charles in 1829. There are no other known records of her at this point.

Blythe

Blythe was an enslaved man who served as the personal bodyman of George Croghan. In November 1813, three months after the battle of Ft. Stephenson (War of 1812), George sent a passport for Blythe to his cousin Isaac Clark asking him to arrange for Blythe to travel to Chillicothe. Travel between free and slave states was not entirely uncommon. The idea that simply traveling to a free state would not automatically emancipate an enslaved person would eventually be upheld by the Dred Scott Decision in 1857.



SPRIT AWARD WINNERS: Sharron Hilbrecht and Amy Liebert

During Locust Grove's closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many volunteers have been helping further our mission to share the stories of all the people who lived here and show what life was like in the early 1800s. Two of our volunteers — Sharron Hilbrecht and Amy Liebert — jumped

in to create and record the first "Lessons from Locust Grove" and videos for "Lift Up Louisville." They also developed materials and recipes to accompany their lessons. This is why the Volunteer Steering Committee has selected them as this issue's Spirit Award Winners.

For nearly two decades, **Sharron Hilbrecht** has been an active member of Locust Grove's family. She has done everything from parking to clean-up during special events; demonstrated in the hearth kitchen, dairy, and residence for school field trips; served on the Education Committee for years; cooked with food historian **Michael Twitty**; and assumed many roles as a historic interpreter for Clark and Croghan family members.



"My current passion — and greatest achievement — at Locust Grove has been developing the character of George Rogers Clark's sister Fanny Clark O'Fallon Thruston Fitzhugh," says Sharron. "It's a challenge because there is not much information about the women in this time period. But when I found some letters online written to and from her sons, I bugged the archivist at Yale enough that he scanned the letters and sent them to me."

Sharron is a "former teacher, theatre geek, and lover of history." "Volunteering at Locust Grove ticks all those boxes," she laughs. She's delighted that she's learned to sew, cook a meal in the hearth kitchen, and make fresh-churned butter — "which my family loves!" She also joined Locust Grove's staff as a weekend manager.

"I'm so proud to be a part of Locust Grove," she adds. "I often reflect on the line by William Faulkner in *Requiem for a Nun* that says, 'The past isn't dead. It isn't even the past.' At Locust Grove, the past is very much alive and evolving. And I find that immensely exciting."



Amy Liebert moved to Louisville from the San Francisco area in 2013 to be with her fiancé **Brian Cushing** (Locust Grove's program director). Two weeks later, she was volunteering.

As the Theatrical Director for the First Person Interpreters, Amy helped to redesign the program starting in 2013. This included

scheduling workshops, planning scenarios for various events, leading rehearsals, and helping with cast auditions.

Amy also is the Ladies' Clothing Director. "I must approve any clothing that the ladies wear during our events," adds Amy. "All interpreters must go through a formal process to assure that what they wear accurately reflects our time period and status."

Amy volunteers for many special events at Locust Grove and is an accomplished hearth cook, training volunteers in hearth cooking and interpreting the kitchen. She does all this while being an assistant professor and head of the History & Political Science Department at Jefferson Community and Technical College in Louisville.

"I suppose my greatest achievement is watching the First Person Interpreter program become even better each year," Amy adds. "By encouraging visitors to talk with us about things like technology, the economy, gender roles and slavery, it can help all of us better connect with and understand the past. Museums like Locust Grove have the ability to show visitors what all those things meant to the individuals who lived here."

A New Look For 2020-2021 Chamber Music Concerts



Chamber Music in the Great Parlor at Locust Grove? Yes! This year's Emilie Strong Smith Chamber Music series will bring musicians to the Great Parlor at Locust Grove to record their performances, using professional recording equipment and engineers. These performances will be streamed to subscribers and listeners online. The uniquely historic atmosphere of the room's acoustics and setting will be retained — but made available safely for our audiences.

Locust Grove has partnered with **Bill Bauer**, the longtime impresario behind our concerts. He will provide commentary and background for each of the performances. Presentations will include a brief segment showing the historic house and grounds to introduce the site to new listeners.

Scheduling, pricing, and performers are still to be determined. We anticipate recording at least two concerts, available later in the season. We'll provide information to our subscribers and general audiences when the details are confirmed.



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More 'Lessons from Locust Grove'

The video lessons and demonstrations that Locust Grove created to encourage children and families to learn about history while the museum was closed have proven to be quite popular.

"Since our closure in March, staff and volunteers have created more than 15 videos on a range of subjects," says **Kaitlyn Tisdale**, director of education and family programs. "We've shown how to make historic recipes like blackberry crisp and a beverage called Switchel, explored gardens and flowers, and even demonstrated how a person would get dressed in 1810."

Most recently, volunteer **Kelly Stevenson** (pictured here) described how cloth is made as she spun fibers into thread and then how that thread in made into cloth on a loom.

All the "Lessons" include background materials, recipes, worksheets, and activities. You can check out the "Lessons at Locust Grove" collection at our website: www.locustgrove.org/lessons.





Historic Locust Grove
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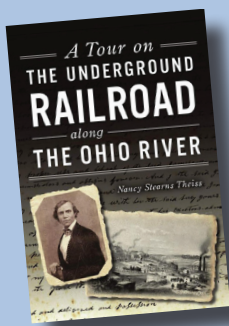


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Our **Living Room Lecture Series** continues bimonthly as historians from around the region educate our audiences live via Zoom. Topics range from Louisville's Hill Sisters to the

Corps of Discovery to the Underground Railroad. We occasionally have evening lectures and also a "historic happy hour" called *The Punch Bowl*. Be sure to join our mailing list for upcoming lectures and view past lectures on YouTube at <https://bit.ly/hlgyoutube>.

Summer/Fall 2020

LOCUST GROVE TO BE FEATURED ON 'A TASTE OF HISTORY' ON PBS



Chefs Steve Thomas and Walter Staib help cameraman Tom Daly get the perfect shot of the Whiskey Peach Slump Cake

On two warm September days last year, the hearth kitchen at Locust Grove was bubbling with energy. **Chef Walter Staib** of the PBS television show *A Taste of History* and his crew were filming an episode for the upcoming Season 11 of this Emmy Award-winning show.

Chef Steve Thomas of Thomas Family Winery and 18th Century Market Fair favorite, His Lordship's Beef, joined Chef Staib in the kitchen. The camaraderie between these two masters of Early American cuisine was instantaneous — with great good humor in the unseasonably warm conditions. Together, they cooked Corn Soup with Okra; Chicken Leek Pie, Burgoo with Squirrel, Rabbit, and Chicken; and Whiskey Peach Slump Cake.

First Person Interpreters **Cheryl and Ron Adkisson, Sharron Hilbrecht, Lee Scott,** and **Brandon Vigliarolo** portrayed members of the Croghan and Clark family of Locust Grove and the Lewis & Clark Expedition. Program Director **Brian Cushing** offered historical context on the Corps of Discovery, George Rogers Clark, and Locust Grove's place in Louisville's story. Chef Staib also interviewed our Craftsman-in-Residence **Dave Phipps** about leatherworking and bucket-making. Season 11, featuring Locust Grove in Episode 8, is streaming now on Amazon Prime. Season 11 is scheduled to air on PBS this fall. Check your local listings.

Special thanks to **Louisville Tourism, Josie and Buck Wiseman, Jane Austen Society of North America—Greater Louisville Region,** and **Genie and Bob Fortunato** for making Locust Grove's appearance on *A Taste of History* possible, and to **Elizabeth Thomas** and **Cameron Rampy** for their kitchen assistance.



HISTORIC LOCUST GROVE
GROVE GAZETTE

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