



Winter-Spring 2022

# HISTORIC LOCUST GROVE GROVE GAZETTE



Architect's rendering of the finished Pavilion

## THE PAVILION AT LOCUST GROVE OPENS SOON!

Yes, the Pavilion will open this spring! No, it might not be fully complete. But we are opening the new facilities anyway, inspired by our own Gen. George Rogers Clark, who famously led his small band of dedicated soldiers through miles of frozen February swampland to conquer a British-held fort back in 1779. Like Clark, we will press on!

I may be exaggerating the obstacles a bit, but when the story of Historic Locust Grove is told 100 years from now, these last few years will be seen as quite an adventure.

Back in 2011, we started with focus groups and surveys. Then we began creating the Master Plan, choosing the architects, meeting with consultants, drawing up the blueprints. We continued, pausing in shock at the price, starting a campaign to raise \$3.2 million (twice what we'd ever raised before), getting bids on construction, again pausing in shock at the price which was now \$3.8 million.

We learned a fun new term, "value engineering the bids" — which means cutting costs by

slashing out your favorite parts of a project. We continued by dividing the project into Phase I (we can afford it) and Phase II (we are going to have to raise more money later). Finally, we signed the contracts.

By the spring of 2020 (you can guess what's coming), we had to pause the campaign at \$2.9 million while we took care of sustaining our operating costs. The contractors pushed back their start date from August 2020 until February 2021 because of multiple illnesses on their team.

When they did start, it rained and rained, labor and supplies became hard to come by, and an eight- or nine-month project is now in its 15th month. "Change order" is another term we learned. And we were still raising money to fill the gap between our coffers and the final costs.



*Continued on next page*

At our opening events, we are pleased to honor these individuals for their extraordinary contributions to these projects:

**Margy Thomas and her late husband Preston Thomas**, whose initial support and generous donation to the Pavilion project made all the rest achievable.

**Kate Dalton Boyer**, whose thoughtful leadership of the Master Plan and the Capital Campaign helped to define our goals and find the resources necessary to reach those goals.

**Hunter Louis**, whose skill and experience leading the Buildings Committee and his enthusiasm for making these structures of the highest quality brought us this fine modern expansion of a historic place.

# PAVILION

## ...BUT IT IS COMPLETELY WORTH ALL OF THE EFFORT!

The Pavilion structure is already beautiful beyond our dreams. It is sited perfectly for a magnificent view of the landscape without impeding the historic view from the house itself. The pavilion's pathways flow along both sides of the Visitors Center connecting with the historic area. This gives us the opportunity to expand our revenue base, attract new visitors, and produce exciting new programs including concerts and other performances. It's a whole new side of Locust Grove!

The site is more accessible, with a longer and safer ramp to the Visitors Center entrance and a wide brick path to the house. We're still working to finally connect the outbuildings to the house with smooth pathways — as soon as we have the funds for them. And we have installed new interpretive panels in the outbuildings and in two places on the grounds to memorialize those enslaved on the site.

In the historic cabin, the new library will provide a space for research and meetings — with all of our core research materials, books, and files finally in one spot. A number of other

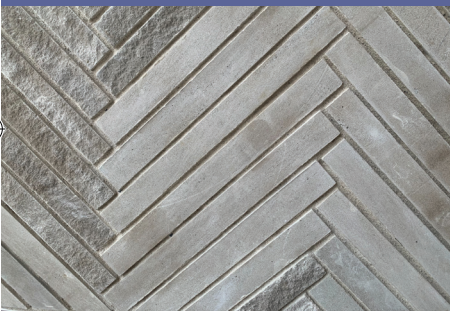
visible and invisible improvements will make the site more effective and expansive, such as upgraded ventilation and a new catering kitchen.

We are so grateful to all those who made this possible, from the donors who believed in this vision to the architects, artisans, and contractors who worked with our staff and Board to create the plans.

This spring we will host a series of opening events, starting with an invitational Garden Party to thank the donors and planners, then invitational events for our close communities of volunteers, members, neighbors, and for the cultural community of Louisville.

Then we will unveil the new facilities to the public at our renewed Gardeners' Fair. We look forward to future programs on the site ranging from concerts to lectures, workshops to camps, festivals to performances, and all that we can dream together.

Executive Director Carol Ely, Ph.D.



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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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# WE'RE MOVING FORWARD! CAPITAL CAMPAIGN, PHASE II

*Kate Widdowson, Development and Membership Coordinator*

Locust Grove begins a new era of growth as we celebrate the completion of major improvements as a result of the Campaign for Locust Grove. We have created more possibilities for programming and the ability to engage the community in new ways — especially through our new outdoor event pavilion and associated areas, along with other site improvements.

While the major part of the original vision has been realized, other components were postponed due to unforeseen issues of the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated delays and steeply rising costs of goods and services. In addition, our contractors found unexpected environmental factors and utility issues on the construction site that both delayed construction and added to the costs.

While our site has expanded, so has the vision for Locust Grove. Our core story has widened in scope with more interpretation of the enslaved community. We've developed plans to enhance programming outreach and our earned income potential.

Due to these many factors, our original goal fell short by about \$800,000 to \$1,000,000 of the real costs. So we have launched a Phase II of the Capital Campaign. The remaining opportunities include:

**Renovate the Lobby** — We will open up the space to better accommodate larger groups. A welcoming reception area will be connected to a glass-enclosed museum store. A rotating exhibit space will allow us to better share our expanding knowledge of this site and its people, unveil new research discoveries, and showcase artifacts.

**Renew the Auditorium** — With rentals, book sales, and lectures, this is a heavily used space in need of updates — including replacing the worn carpet, installing a dropped ceiling with acoustical improvements, and a new audio system.

**Convert the Catering Kitchen** — The former catering kitchen will become a multi-use space as a classroom and for small workshops. It also could be used as a changing room for rentals, with direct access to the courtyard.

**Upgrade the Parking Lots** — The existing lots will be reshaped, regraded, resurfaced, and landscaped to provide visitor parking in a more attractive setting.

**Create Accessible Pathways to the Farm Distillery, Louisa's House, Other Outbuildings** — These outbuildings are an important part of the story of the enslaved community of Locust Grove and should be accessible for all. Updated pathways will create equitable experiences by welcoming visitors of all levels of mobility to experience more of what this site has to offer.

**Renovate Staff Offices** — As our operations expand, so do our staffing needs. We are out of space to sufficiently house all current full-time staff members. We plan to renovate existing storage space and hallways to create more shared open office space.

**Replace Historic House HVAC Systems** — In partnership with Metro Parks, which is providing partial funding for this project, we must replace badly outdated heating, cooling, and ventilation systems for the preservation of the building and collections and the safety and comfort of our visitors.

These Capital Campaign projects — based on our Master Plan — are taking Locust Grove and its audiences into the third century of the history of this unique home and landscape. As we center Louisville's story in the inclusive national narrative of growth and change in the Early American Republic, we look forward to many years of working to illuminate the culture of Locust Grove's time and place.

If you wish to contribute to Phase II of the Capital Campaign or to sponsor all or part of any of the specific projects above, please contact [kwiddowson@locustgrove.org](mailto:kwiddowson@locustgrove.org) or call 502-897-9845 ext. 108. Donations may be made in honor of or in memory of individuals or families.

You also can set up secure automatic monthly, quarterly, or yearly donations online. Go to [www.nfggive.org](http://www.nfggive.org) and search "Historic Locust Grove" to donate through Network for Good. Or just scan the QR code here to go directly to the Locust Grove donation page.



*Architect's rendering of the renovated lobby and museum store area*



# FROM HOME TO HOUSE MUSEUM: ARCHIVES PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS LOCUST GROVE'S RESTORATION

*Locust Grove's conversion from a family farmhouse to a historic house museum began in 1961 when the house and remaining 55 acres were purchased by Jefferson County and the Commonwealth of Kentucky. At that time, Locust Grove was added to the Historic Homes Foundation (HHF). Locust Grove separated from the HHF in 2001 and became a separate 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with its own Board of Directors.*

*The initial restoration of Locust Grove included the historic house, as well as the excavation and reconstruction of some of the property's outbuildings.*

*The progress of restoration was documented via that era's go-to process — slide film.*

*Visitor Services Assistant Noah Hiner has begun an archival project, under the supervision of Director of Interpretation Kaitlyn Tisdale, to digitize those hundreds of slide images taken during the restoration of the house and the outbuildings. He is creating and organizing digital files of the slides, as well as devising a way to safely store the actual slides themselves. Here are a few of the images that Noah has digitized.*

The massive project to restore Locust Grove and its outbuildings and grounds in the early 1960s required a great deal of planning and consultation. Responsible for the accuracy of the restoration are (from the left) **Frederic Morgan**, famed Louisville architect who was the site manager; **Walter Macomber**, former Colonial Williamsburg architect who envisioned the full restoration; **James Cogar**, an advisor from Shaker Village; and **Jim Thomas**, then Clerk of the Works for the restoration project.



Archaeologists discovered the foundations of two outbuildings that were attached to the still-existing 18th century smokehouse. Now interpreted as the hearth kitchen and the wash house, those two structures were carefully reconstructed following the style still apparent in the smokehouse. While the main part of the smokehouse was still intact, the second story/roof had to be restored. Old stone that was found onsite was used in the reconstruction efforts.

One of the most exciting discoveries was on the second floor. When workers removed two walls to restore what is now the Great Parlor, they found remnants of the original wallpaper that the Croghans had used in that largest room in the house. During Locust Grove's "re-restoration" 10 years ago, those remnants led to the exact replica of the original wallpaper that hangs in the parlor today.



## THE SWIFTS OF LOCUST GROVE

Geoffrey McMahon, Buildings and Grounds Supervisor

One of John James Audubon's paintings of swifts in his "Birds of America"

It is no secret to friends of Locust Grove that this place is a sanctuary for wildlife seeking refuge from the urban/suburban landscapes that surround us.

This was especially evident in the early days of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, as canceled events and programs left the staff with a quieter historic site than normal. Although we continued to welcome dogwalkers, joggers, and children from the neighborhood, the first few months of lockdowns provided special opportunities to commune with nature.

One such occasion took place in the early summer of 2020. Director of Interpretation **Kaitlyn Tisdale** and I were working on converting the former residence into the wash house when we heard a very strange noise originating from the hearth and chimney. The sound was eerily reptilian, like something from a *Jurassic Park* film. Our trepidation turned into relief when we discovered that it was a nest of chimney swifts with chicks that had just hatched.

A few weeks later, while walking past the outbuildings, I noticed a young swift attempting to escape through the closed windows of the wash house. I quietly entered the room and slowly opened both windows. After a few moments, the bird successfully flew out to join the rest of the swifts circling overhead.



The experience reminded Kaitlyn of an account by John James Audubon in "The Birds of America." In 1808, Audubon was in Louisville with his wife and often spent time with their "kind friend Major Croghan" at Locust Grove.

During one of their discussions of local birds, Major Croghan informed Audubon of a "remarkable" old sycamore tree along the river road that was known to house numerous swifts in the summer months.

Unsurprisingly, Audubon was enamored by the spectacle and returned to investigate the tree several times, observing the swifts as they entered and exited the tree in giant swarms. Audubon estimated that the sycamore contained at least 9,000 swifts. He concluded that the tree must have been occupied for many years based on the volume of feathers and guano that filled the void in the tree.

Undoubtedly the "remarkable" old sycamore tree on the river has been washed away by one of the many floods since the time of Audubon and Croghan. But I would like to imagine that descendants of those swifts can still be seen flying above Locust Grove in the summer months.

A sycamore was among the trees recently planted in our pollinator meadow by the Metro Parks Forestry Department. The new tree is located along the creek near the springhouse. Perhaps by next century, we will have another remarkable sycamore tree for the swifts to occupy once again.

### 'Unfolding the Story' Tour Now Every Saturday at 10:30 a.m., April through October



Participants follow enslaved laundress Louisa as she takes "Unfolding the Story" visitors through her day.

Locust Grove is open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Guided tours of the historic house and outbuildings are four times a day — 10:30 a.m., 12 noon, 1:30 p.m., and 3 p.m.

New this year, the 10:30 a.m. tour every Saturday will be the "Unfolding the Story" tour. It is a tour presented from the point of view of Alfred and Louisa, two members of Locust Grove's enslaved community.

Virtual tours are still available by request by emailing Director of Interpretation **Kaitlyn Tisdale** ([ktisdale@locustgrove.org](mailto:ktisdale@locustgrove.org)). Group tours also are welcomed. To reserve a group tour, contact Visitor Services Director **Jennifer Jansen** ([jjansen@locustgrove.org](mailto:jjansen@locustgrove.org)).

For more information and to purchase tickets, go to [www.locustgrove.org](http://www.locustgrove.org).

# SPIRIT AWARD

## MARYKAY LIEVENSE

Enthusiasm, reliability, warmth, hospitality. Those are but a few of the qualities of this issue's Spirit Award Winner, **Marykay Lievens** — a staunch and dependable volunteer for Locust Grove's Book Sales.

"Marykay always shows up for book sorts and sales, ready to do whatever is necessary for a successful event," says **Brenda Tuckson**, Locust Grove Board member and coordinator of volunteers for the book sales.

"She reaches out to me before any scheduled event to see what preparations are necessary," continues Brenda. "And she's instrumental in helping new volunteers acclimate to what is often a very busy and fast-paced time. And always with a smile. Plus, Marykay is a wonderful baker, often bringing in goodies to share with the book sale volunteers."

About six years ago, Marykay recognized the late Locust Grove volunteer **Lynn Renau** who was checking out customers at a book sale. "I made a special effort to tell Lynn how sweet and



responsible her daughters were when they babysat for my daughter years before," says Marykay. "A mother likes to hear things like that."

"Lynn said I should volunteer for Locust Grove's book sales — and buy more books! So in 2017, I started volunteering and am having a great time."

Marykay spent most of her childhood in Louisville, finishing in the first graduating class at Westport High School. After attending college in Michigan and teaching for a year, she returned to Louisville with her husband, worked, and raised a daughter. During several moves around the country, she was an active volunteer.

In her 40s, she returned to college for her MSSW and worked with the geriatric population in various positions until retirement.

"I also was a tutor until I found my way to Locust Grove — and I've been hooked ever since," she laughs. "I love the people, the books (of course!), and the mission of Locust Grove."

## WELCOME, BLAIRE BISCHOFF

WELCOME



We are pleased to welcome **Blaire Bischoff** as Locust Grove's new Event and Marketing Manager.

Blaire is looking forward to planning and promoting Locust Grove's favorite events, including the Gardeners' Fair, 18th Century Market Fair, Book Sales, and Antiques Markets. She will be helping to form and rekindle community connections to increase support for Locust Grove's programs and special occasions.

"I am excited to learn more about what makes Locust Grove significant and then sharing that knowledge with the community," she says.

A Bardstown, Ky., native, Blaire is grateful that her family's vacations were focused on learning and curiosity. They visited

national parks and historic sites, including the Grand Canyon, Mount Rushmore, and The National Mall in Washington, D.C. "These experiences instilled in me a love for American history, the outdoors, and the importance of lifelong learning," she adds.

Blaire earned a B.A. in Communication from Bellarmine University in Louisville, where she was an active member of the Women in Leadership club and a member of the nationally ranked cheerleading team. While in college, Blaire enjoyed volunteering with animal rescue organizations in Louisville. She also has experience planning and coordinating various events.

"Blaire is quick, creative, and a problem-solver," says Executive Director **Carol Ely**. "Within just a few days she had already taken on the immediate event and marketing needs of the site and jumped in to innovate and promote our many upcoming events. I'm impressed — and excited to work with her."

### IN MEMORIAM



- Max Baumgardner
- Bill Brittain
- Foster Burba
- Bill Goodan
- Rick Guillaume
- Linda "Kay" McArthur
- Doug McFarland
- Tom Noland
- Louise Seiler
- Laura Spalding



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,

# DONATIONS

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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For people donating \$250 and up to  
Historic Locust Grove from November 1,  
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**Locust Grove's Seeds Now on Sale  
in the Museum Store**

Gardener **Sarah Sutherland** carefully  
collects, dries, and then packages seeds  
from Locust Grove's heritage plants.  
Purchase them for \$1.50 per packet.

Winter-Spring 2022

Gardeners' Fair: 'Spring on the Farm' — Saturday & Sunday, May 14 & 15

SPRING ON THE FARM

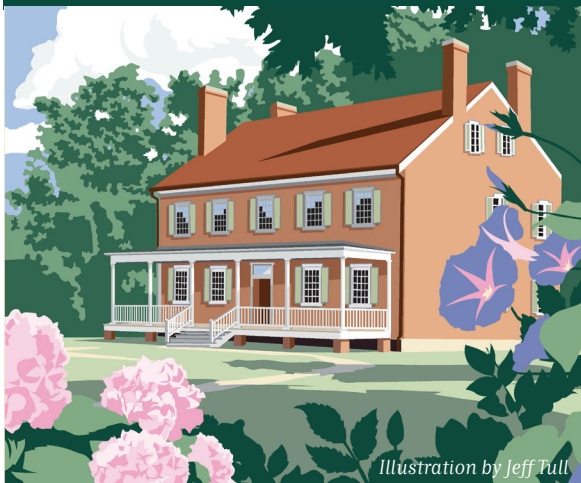


Illustration by Jeff Tull

2022 GARDENERS' FAIR

Saturday, May 14 Sunday, May 15  
10:00 AM - 4:30 PM

\$8 Adults / \$4 Children 6-12 / under 6 free

It's Spring! Time to get your lawn and garden ready for another season of beauty and bounty at the Gardeners' Fair, Saturday and Sunday, May 14 and 15. As always, Locust Grove's Gardeners' Fair will feature vendors selling seeds, flowers, vegetable plants, garden tools, and garden-focused goods such as bird houses, lawn ornaments, flowerpots, and more.

This year, the fair is a part of Locust Grove's "Spring on the Farm" featuring farm animals and demonstrations. Among others, Ballyhoo Fiber Emporium will demonstrate goat milking and sheep shearing. The Shepherd's Creations Alpaca Farm will be on hand with their popular alpacas, alongside a collection of beautiful and useful products made from alpaca fleece. And 502 Hemp will be demonstrating the proper usage of various CBD and hemp products now on the market.

Under the roof of Locust Grove's beautiful new open-air pavilion, you'll find first-person interpreters talking about 18th century farming practices. And, as always, you can purchase food at Locust Grove's concession stand as well as delights from food trucks and Gelato Gilberto.

Hours: 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. both days. Admission: \$8 for adults; \$4 for children 6–12; free for children under 6.

HISTORIC LOCUST GROVE

GROVE GAZETTE

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