



Winter 2023

HISTORIC LOCUST GROVE

GROVE GAZETTE

WINTER BREAK – A TIME TO PLAN, FOCUS, AND REFRESH

The Winter Break at Locust Grove provides a complete change of focus for the staff. Instead of rushing to promote and prepare for events, instead of staffing the visitor center and opening the doors for tours every day, we have time to take a longer view.

We meet as a staff and with our Board to develop plans for the year ahead . . . or, this year, for three and more years ahead as we launch our new 2023 Strategic Plan.

We inspect, clean, and repair collections, buildings, and teaching materials. We get the grounds and gardens ready for the growing season ahead. We sort and file materials from the past year of activity. We meet with potential renters. We take in books for our semi-annual sales. And we even have a few moments to eat lunch together as a staff every Friday.

This year we've also decided to remain closed for tours in February when the weather is bad and visitors are scarce. However, we've made an exception for a few programs and opened our doors for participants, regardless of the calendar.

We'll reopen fully renewed and refreshed on March 1st.

After almost three years, we've been able to remove the Plexiglas that had been keeping our hands-on "Day in the Life" exhibit hands-off. Now the items are available for interaction.



*Research is vital, but it's a challenge to find the time in the busy visitor season. We love the opportunity to incorporate new information and insights into our tours and programs as Assistant Program Coordinator **Heather Hiner** (L) and Museum Theatre Director **Brandi LaShay** are doing.*



*Seasonal staffer **Ian Bryant** puts his all into demolishing a counter in the former kitchen of the Audubon Room. As part of the first phase of the Capital Campaign, this older kitchen was replaced by a modern and much larger catering kitchen in the new addition.*



*The historic house is constantly cleaned, but the Winter Break gives Buildings and Ground Supervisor **Geoffrey McMahon** the opportunity to move, inspect, and deep-clean our collections, and mitigate any problems we find.*

www.locustgrove.org

DIRECTOR'S LETTER – Carol Ely, Ph.D.



In all the fanfare over our new event pavilion, you may have overlooked our other wonderful new facility, the library. The library is located in the 1800s log building at the southeast corner of the Visitors' Center, accessible through the exhibit gallery. It's not yet open for use for research while we continue to sort and place our book collection on the shelves.

Locust Grove has also amassed quantities of paper files of articles, copies of original documents, photos, journals, and other materials that will benefit researchers, which will be housed in the new library.

We'll have a computer terminal for access to databases such as Ancestry.com, Newspapers.com, and JSTOR (academic journals).

The original archival materials that we own such as deeds and Croghan family letters, as well as other fragile documents and books, will remain in our secure collections storage area.

Our library materials are focused on the people and times of Locust Grove. We have collected works on George Rogers Clark ranging

from children's books, to the colorful Lowell Thomas saga of *The Hero of Vincennes*, to the recent scholarly work by **Gwynne Potts**, *George Rogers Clark and William Croghan*.

Our shelves include an extensive section on Audubon and Kentucky wildlife, on period gardens, on the Revolutionary War and its era, and works and documents on the history of enslavement and the lives of enslaved communities in the region. Decorative arts, clothing, artisanry, and many more topics are well represented.

Once the space is set up, researchers and members of the general public can request an appointment. Our staff and volunteers will be able to use the space for study, meetings, and work sessions. We'll make an announcement when the space is generally accessible.

All this is thanks to the thoughtful renovation by our architects, **de Leon & Primmer**, which was funded by our generous donors, the **Ratterman** family. Work on cataloguing and arranging the library has largely been done by Board member and volunteer **Del Marie Vaccaro**.



And, to make the space even more special, we are awaiting a custom table being constructed for us by **Ed James**, master carpenter and Board member.

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The mission of Historic Locust Grove is to preserve and interpret the historic landscape and buildings of Locust Grove, the final home of Louisville's founder George Rogers Clark, and to tell the stories of all the individuals who lived and worked here, both free and enslaved, cultivating a deeper understanding of the present through a richer understanding of the past.

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New Research Discoveries Shed Light on Enslaved Guides at Mammoth Cave

— **Kaitlyn Tisdale, Director of Interpretation**

In November 2021, an online auction was held by Hindman Auction House. I sat eagerly at my desk, coffee in hand, in the fervent hope of winning the latest treasure that had been discovered relating to Mammoth Cave and, tangentially, Locust Grove. The treasure — a Mammoth Cave Account Book kept by Dr. John Croghan from May 1846 – June 1848, not long before John’s death.

Unfortunately, Locust Grove was not the only bidder on this incredible find. We were wildly outbid, but fate intervened. That same week, Locust Grove board member **Del Marie Vaccaro** told me that she knew the winning bidder for the ledger! It was the National Cave Museum (NCM) — a small, privately owned museum that sits in a concrete building just inside Mammoth Cave National Park.

So, earlier this year, I made connections with NCM board members **Stanley Sides** and **Gordon Smith** — and went on a research trip to the cave area. With the help of Assistant Curator **Laine Roberts**, the discoveries I made were both fascinating and exhilarating.

It is no secret that Locust Grove and Mammoth Cave have a noteworthy connection. Dr. John Croghan purchased Mammoth Cave in 1839 for \$10,000 and retained possession until his death in January of 1849. In this transaction, John Croghan also purchased enslaved cave guide Stephen Bishop and “leased” cave guides Materson and Nick Bransford.

It is important to emphasize that being leased out was still an oppressive and traumatic act of enslavement. Their lives and bodies were “rented out” for \$100 a year from their enslaver, Thomas Bransford.

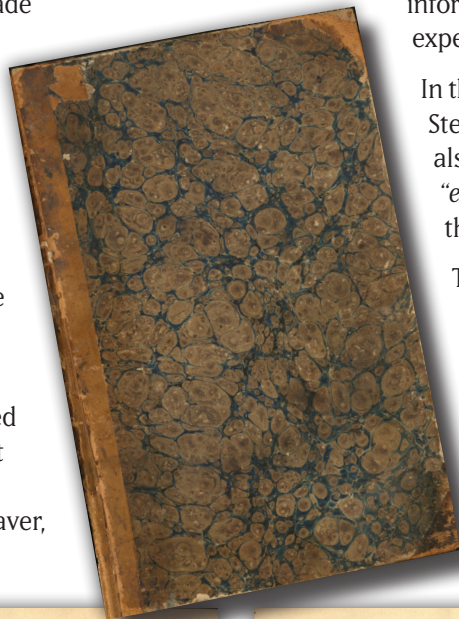
By far, the most famous of Dr. John Croghan’s enslaved cave guides was Stephen Bishop. Without the brilliance of Stephen Bishop and his creation of the first map of the cave, it is unclear how much of the cave we might know of today. He was just 18 years old when purchased by John Croghan, and he spent his entire adulthood traversing the caverns, enchanting cave guests, and entering the dark unknown on his own exploration expeditions.

The ledger held information on the purchasing of materials for the first Mammoth Cave Hotel — John’s expansion project on the few small cabins at the foot of the cave that functioned as the only shelters on the property until the late 1830s.

My favorite discoveries in the ledger were the details of medical treatment for the enslaved community at the cave. It’s important to note that this was not wholly altruistic, but rather Dr. Croghan protecting his investment in his “property.” The very fact that we only find this information in a property account book listing expenses is telling.

In these pages, we discover that Charlotte, Stephen’s wife, received midwifery care. We also discover an entry dated June 2, 1847, for “extracting & cleaning Stephen’s Teeth” with the fee of \$2.00 next to it.

The relationships now built between Locust Grove and the National Cave Museum prove vital in learning more about the early history of the cave and, most importantly, the community of men, women, and children that helped build and sustain it.



Courtesy of the National Cave Museum, Park City, Kentucky

National Cave Museum	
1846 Cash Received	Cash Paid Out
Dec 12 Mr. J. Talley 1.00	15 Midwife to Charlotte 2.50
" 14 " B. Haggard 1.00	" 16 Midwife water bottles for Matt 1.50
" 16 " B. Haines 1.00	" 20 Clothing for Stephen & son 1.50
" 17 " J. B. Haines 1.00	" 21 Expenses of 1/2 Thomas to Louisville 1.00
" 18 " D. J. Thomas 1.00	" 22 Passage to Locust Grove 3.00
" 19 " B. J. Thomas 2.00	" 23 one pair women's shoes 75
" 20 " Mr. W. L. Haines 1.00	" 24 " do stitching for servants 2.00
" 21 " Mr. Everett 2.00	" 25 Expenses of Glasgow 2.00
" 22 " " 8.00	" 26 Midwife having servants 2.00
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SCHOOL GROUPS



CHAMBER MUSIC CONCERTS



GARDENERS' FAIR



BOOK SALES



PAVILION GRAND OPENING



FREE INDEPENDENT

IT WAS A VERY

After two years of “pandemic caution,” 2022 found Locust Grove filled with familiar and new activities attended by enthusiastic visitors. Be sure to sign up for email announcements of all programs and events at www.locustgrove.org.

Discovering Local 19th Century Gardening –Sarah Sutherland, Gardener

For more than 20 years, I’ve spent many hours researching heirloom plants, gardening practices, and the farming techniques of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. An 1806 gardening book and a yearly catalogue from the 1700s of stock offerings from a nursery in Queens, N.Y., showed me what varieties were available in given years.

But I needed specifics on early 19th century gardening practices in what was then the wilds of Kentucky. So I was thrilled to discover the gardening journals of Joseph Hornsby. Formerly of Williamsburg, Va., Hornsby moved to Shelby County, Ky., in the late 1700s, bringing with him a treasure trove of seeds — for fruit trees and vines, grasses and clovers, and a wealth of vegetables, flowers, and herbs.

He had obtained these seeds from a variety of people in and around Williamsburg, including Thomas Jefferson. He began his Shelby County gardening journals in 1798 — keeping good notes, not just of the seed varieties, but the age and quality of the seeds and how well (or not) the seeds performed.

He also sent me on many deep dives to find out, for instance, what *saintfion* is . . . what it means to mend a *watergap* . . . and if a *gelded sow* meant what it sounds like. (It does.)

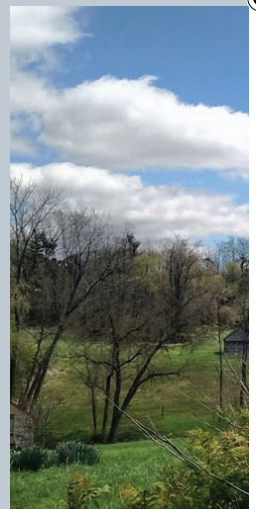
I’ve spent years tracking down seed varieties that Hornsby mentions by name. Like most gardeners, he experienced

failures along with successes. These provide great clues as to what I shouldn’t attempt to plant today.

I also am considering how climate change is affecting the observations that Mr. Hornsby made centuries ago. Last year in very early spring, I grew Glory of England peas at Locust Grove — peas he planted at the end of April 1798. Our peas did quite well, but I had planted them nearly two months earlier than Mr. Hornsby did.

Joseph Hornsby is a fascinating man — as a gardener and as a local historical figure. Not only does his diary extensively cover his gardening practices and the weather, but he writes about the people he enslaved, the locals, quack medicine, and includes a smattering of politics. He also mentions some Louisvillians he interacted with. I’m still looking for a connection to the Croghans and Locust Grove!

I’m grateful to Joseph Hornsby for the insights he gives me to himself and to the early days in this area of Kentucky. And I’m so pleased that his diary provides so much information about central Kentucky agriculture at the start of the 19th century. We have a copy of his diary in our library if you’d like to read through it.



Y GOOD YEAR

Some upcoming events not highlighted in this Gazette include:

March 1 — First Wednesday Lecture, 1 p.m.

April 5 — First Wednesday Lecture, 1 p.m.

May 18 — Kentucky Shakespeare presenting *Hamlet*, 6:30 p.m.



CHRISTMAS ON THE FARM



ANTIQUES MARKETS



PENDENCE DAY



SPRING ON THE FARM



LECTURES



PERFORMANCES

Thank you, Jane Smith



You can read Sarah's entire article about the Hornsby garden diaries in the current edition of *The Shelby Historian*, a publication from the Shelby County, Ky., Historical Society. <https://www.shelbykyhistory.org/>



Locust Grove has said farewell to **Jane Smith** who had been a volunteer at Locust Grove for 23 years. Jane passed away in November 2022. Her son and his wife were by her side.

Jane was a gracious and versatile volunteer, stepping in to help in several capacities. Her many years as a school librarian led her into Locust Grove's library where she catalogued the volumes and set up a database for the books. She continued working with books as she joined other volunteers to sort the donated books and help out during the book sales.

Jane was a familiar part of school tours and other special events, demonstrating techniques employed by Locust Grove's enslaved cooks in the hearth kitchen. She was a talented baker, offering her treats as a "Lecture Lady" for the First Wednesday Afternoon Lectures — especially her popular "Butterscotch Bites." Jane found delight as one of the team of "Hysterical/Historical Dusters" who regularly helped with cleaning the house. Her beloved husband **Bob** was a docent and a woodworking volunteer for many years, as well.

"Jane was a quiet, gentle, and most kind-hearted volunteer," says Executive Director **Carol Ely**. "She was an all-around helper, multi-talented, and incredibly generous with her time and talents. We have missed her enthusiasm and great smile."

WELCOME

BRANDI LASHAY

Locust Grove is delighted to introduce **Brandi LaShay**, our new Museum Theatre Director.

While at Historic Locust Grove, Brandi's goals are to create narratives that engage more with the architecture of the site and with visitors, activate more theatrical practices and curate a culturally immersive experience for everyone involved.

Her duties include creating content relevant to this historic site; coordinating creative initiatives; recruiting talent for on-site performances and special events; script writing; and managing artistic funding.

"I encourage the actors to re-imagine the lives of those men, women and children enslaved here," says Brandi. "We strive to highlight what makes them a good person, rather than a good slave."

She's also doing research with Assistant Program Coordinator **Heather Hiner** to continue adding to the names and stories



of the people who were enslaved by the Croghans and Clarks.

Brandi is a native of Orangeburg, S.C., where she graduated from Claflin University, an HBCU. She pursued graduate studies in the University of Louisville's Theatre Arts Program and is certified in African American Theatre. She is a Performance Practitioner and Resident Teaching Artist with the Jefferson County Public Schools.

Brandi is active in Louisville's theatrical community as a freelance performer and a founding creative partner with IDEAS xLab — an artist-run nonprofit.

"Brandi's skill as an actress creates a connection between past and present that is moving and revelatory," says Locust Grove's Executive Director **Carol Ely**. "And now her work as a director, writer, and coordinator of this program is opening up unexpected possibilities to re-imagine the stories of the community enslaved on this land."

Celebrate May at the Gardeners' Fair and Spring on the Farm

Locust Grove returns to its roots as a 19th century farm with the **28th annual Gardeners' Fair weekend — Saturday and Sunday, May 13 and 14, from 10 a.m. — 4:30 p.m.** Visit the place "Where Louisville Begins." Search for your own vines and fig trees, perennials and annuals, herbs and native plants, garden art and garden tools from regional vendors.

Demonstrators will be on hand to teach about farm animals, growing your own green spaces, and other gardening activities.

There also will be workshops for both children and adults. We'll announce the workshops and the fees throughout the next two

months on our website and in emails. Be sure to sign up for Locust Grove's emails at www.locustgrove.org.

Spring on the Farm will feature Locust Grove's Museum Theater Actors with performances scheduled throughout the weekend. Admission includes walk-through tours of the historic house.

You'll enjoy food delights from several vendors, including Sweet N' Savory Food Truck and Crowler Catering.

Admission is \$8 for adults, and \$4 for children ages 6-12, free for children under 6.



Donations Received from October 16, 2022, through January 15, 2023

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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KENTUCKY HUMANITIES



Locust Grove will be a new pick-up site this year for Rootbound Farm's CSA Farm Share Program. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) provides a direct link and relationship between people and the food they eat, the land it grows on, and the farmers who grow it.

Rootbound Farm is a local organic family farm in Crestwood, Ky. CSA members receive a weekly "farm share" that may include organic veggies, fruits, eggs, and meats directly from the farm. Three box sizes are available, and the shares are customizable every week, so you get more of the items you love.

CSA is a great way to get to know your farmers and have access to **local** certified organic farm-fresh produce and meats. Weekly deliveries will begin in May and signups are open now. Visit www.rootboundfarm.com. To learn more and to sign up, you can go to csa.farmigo.com/join/rootboundfarmcsa.



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Gardeners' Fair/Spring on the Farm
May 13-14, 10 AM – 4:30 PM

Winter 2023

Spring Book Sale! March 23: Members' Preview, 10 AM-7 PM; March 24-26: Open to Public, 10 AM-4:30 PM



"Books may well be the only true magic."

—Alice Hoffman

Walk into Locust Grove's big book sale this month and you'll be surrounded by magic. You'll find many thousands of books, ready to magically transport you to the worlds of history, biography, mystery, science fiction, travel, cooking, art, literature, childrens' books, and so much more. There also is a large selection of DVDs, audio books, jigsaw puzzles, and games.



Prices for books in the large section to the right begin at \$1 for paperbacks, and \$2 for hardcover books.

On the individually priced side of the room, you'll find special gift-quality books, used and new, along with special editions, elegant literary works, beautiful books about gardening and cooking, and many other unusual finds. There's also a collection of beautiful remaindered books at great prices.

HISTORIC LOCUST GROVE

GROVE GAZETTE

www.locustgrove.org