

Clark exhibit set to open

Legendary general showcased at Locust Grove

By Martha Elson
melson@courier-journal.com
The Courier-Journal

Historic Locust Grove in the Indian Hills area will celebrate the Fourth of July by unveiling a permanent exhibit that portrays Gen. George Rogers Clark as a dashing young man.

The exhibit tells the story of the 18th-century farm estate and is in a new \$900,000 addition to the visitors center that's also opening for the first time.

"It's quite a change," said Bonny Wise, marketing director for Locust Grove, 561 Blankenbaker Lane. Admission is free on Friday.

Titled "A Country Worth Defending: Land & Family in Early Kentucky," the exhibit uses wall illustrations, text and interactive features to tell about the settlement and development of the Louisville region. It replaces a much smaller exhibit at the visitors center.

Clark was a Revolutionary War general who was known as the founder of Louisville. He was the brother of explorer William Clark of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

He's portrayed in a new light as "a tall, rugged, red-headed youth who was a natural leader." He's quoted as saying: "If a Cuntrey was not worth protecting, it was not worth Claiming."



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A permanent exhibit about Gen. George Rogers Clark will open soon at Historic Locust Grove. The exhibit tells the story of the 18th-century farm estate and is in a new \$900,000 addition to the visitors center that's also opening.

"Red hair ran in the family," Wise said.

Clark also is described as "a keen observer of the natural world" who corresponded for 30 years with Thomas Jefferson, who had been a neighbor in Virginia.

Clark's image has been shaped by portraits done later in life and the effects of later personal troubles.

But he was best known as a military hero, and July 4 also marks the anniversary of his Illinois Regiment's defeat of the British at Kas-

kaskia, Ill., in 1778 during the campaign to secure the Northwest Territory.

Wise is making a child's dress that can be tried on as part of the exhibit. Other items that can be handled — including a military uniform and textiles from Clark's day — will be displayed on small, wooden wall racks. Re-enactors will portray Clark's military company as part of the gallery opening events Friday.

Clark spent his last years until his death in 1818

living at Locust Grove with his sister and brother-in-law, Lucy and William Croghan.

George Rogers Clark also was a land surveyor who worked with William Croghan. A re-created surveyors' office in an 1810 log building also is part of the new exhibit, which was created by the local Solid Light company. JRA Architects of Louisville designed the new center wing.

Locust Grove — a National Historic Landmark

— originally was a 694-acre farm with a house built in 1790 by the Croghans.

IF YOU GO

What: "A Country Worth Defending: Land & Family in Early Kentucky" exhibit at Historic Locust Grove visitors center.

When: Free opening 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday

Where: 561 Blankenbaker Lane.

Cost after Friday: \$3 or free with admission to Locust Grove.

Information: 897-9845 or www.locustgrove.org.

The remaining 55-acre site is now owned by Louisville metro government and operated by the private, nonprofit Historic Locust Grove Inc., which raised the money for the new visitors center and gallery.

Reporter Martha Elson can be reached at (502) 582-7061.