Alexander Ramsey House

Pre-Visit Materials
Grades K-2
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K-2nd grade pre-visit materials for the Alexander Ramsey House, Minnesota Historical Society

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Dear Teacher,

The staff of the Alexander Ramsey House welcomes you and your students! We hope you find our new classroom materials helpful and interesting. Your students' experiences at the Ramsey House will be more meaningful if they are prepared for their visit, and if they have the opportunity to reflect afterwards. With this in mind, we have created activities to extend learning in many subject areas, focusing on varied learning styles.

Our Educational Tours provide a more age-appropriate experience and engage multiple senses. We hope you and your students will enjoy the tours and ask that you take a few moments after you have toured the house to fill out a short survey. We will use the information you provide to further tailor our tours and classroom materials to fulfill your needs and preferences.

Please spend some time with your students and chaperones discussing museum behavior. Rules of etiquette were important to Victorian people, and we have some of our own. To preserve the house and its artifacts, please do not bring gum or candy, food or drink. Cameras and cell phones may only be used outside of the house. And of course, please refrain from touching unless otherwise instructed.

We want to encourage your students to ask questions and share their own ideas. We recommend reminding chaperones that our Educational Tours are tailored to the children, with the goal of involving them as much as possible.

If you have questions or requests not addressed in this packet, please contact us. We look forward to seeing you at the Alexander Ramsey House!

Sincerely,

The Alexander Ramsey House Staff
1. Which educational materials did you use with your students?

2. Were the materials helpful in preparing your students for their experience at the Ramsey House?

3. Are there other types of materials you would have liked?

4. What would have made you more likely to use the educational materials?

5. What did you feel was the most valuable part of the tour?

6. What part of the tour do you feel could be improved?

7. Do you have any other feedback for us?

Thank you so much! Please return this survey in the envelope provided. We hope to see you next year!
Alexander Ramsey was born in 1815 in Pennsylvania. Alexander married Anna Jenks in 1845. Four years later Alex, Anna, and their three year old son traveled by steamboat, stagecoach, and canoe to the new Minnesota Territory where Mr. Ramsey was to be the first governor. Mr. Ramsey's job was to buy land from the Dakota and Ojibwe Indians so that settlers could move to Minnesota. In 1860, Mr. Ramsey became the second governor of the state of Minnesota and held that position during the Civil and Dakota Wars. He showed his pride in Minnesota as the first President of the Minnesota Historical Society and as a U.S. Senator. He loved his family very much and lived with his daughter and grandchildren in what he called his "Mansion House" until he died in 1903.

Anna Jenks Ramsey was born in Pennsylvania in 1826. She was different from many girls at the time because she learned to read, write, and do math. When her husband told her in 1849 that they were moving to Minnesota, Mrs. Ramsey did not know what to expect. The first years in Minnesota were difficult. Two of their young children died, and Mrs. Ramsey told her husband she would "never want to winter again in St. P." She later came to love Minnesota as much as her husband did and was active in planning and building the present Ramsey House. Mrs. Ramsey bought all the furnishings in New York for the "Mansion House." Mrs. Ramsey traveled to Europe and to the American West before she died at 58 years of age.

Marion Ramsey Furness was the third child born to Alex and Anna and the only child to live to be an adult. When she was nineteen, her family moved into the present Ramsey House, and on her twenty-second birthday, she married Charles Furness in her home. Marion and Charlie had four children, but their second son died as a baby. Then Charlie became sick with a mental illness and had to live in an institution the rest of his life. Marion moved back to St. Paul and raised their three children in her parents' home. She was very active in St. Paul's social life and loved music. She lived in the Ramsey House until her death in 1935.

Anita, Ramsey, and Laura Furness were Marion and Charlie's children. Anita was born in 1876, and when she was six years old, her mother described her as "aggravating + then fascinating as usual." Ramsey, a year younger than Anita, was described by his grandfather as "a daredevil sort of fellow." Laura, born in 1882, described herself at thirteen as a "great sport" who rode a bicycle every night. When Ramsey grew up he moved to Missouri, but his sisters lived together in the Ramsey House until they died in 1956 and 1964. They chose to give their house to Minnesota Historical Society so we can learn about their family today.
Alexander Ramsey’s Family Tree

Objective: To gain familiarity with the Ramsey family, to use a family tree.

Use this family tree to answer the questions on the next page.

You might want to work with a partner!
The Ramsey/Furness Family Picture
1. Is there a name in your family that more than one person has? What is that name?

2. How many people in the Ramsey family were named Alexander?

3. Anita's full name was Anna Ramsey Earl Furness. Name all the people she could have been named for.

4. Who takes care of the children in your family?

5. Often Aunt Hannah took care of the Anita, Ramsey, and Laura. How was she related to them?

6. Do you have a sister or a brother? How many years older or younger are you?

7. How old was Anita when Laura was born?
1. The Alexander Ramsey House has 5 rooms on the first floor and 6 rooms on the second floor. How many rooms are there on both floors put together?

2. Marion's bedroom is 360 square feet. Her parent's room is 324 square feet. Who had the bigger room?

3. Alexander Ramsey came to Minnesota when he was 33 years old, and Minnesota became a state when he was 44. How many years was Alex here before Minnesota was a state?

4. Alexander Ramsey bought fish for 32 cents and milk for $1.32. How much did he pay for the fish and milk together?
1. The Alexander Ramsey House has 5 rooms on the first floor and 6 rooms on the second floor. How many rooms are there on both floors put together?

5 rooms + 6 rooms = 11 rooms

2. Marion's bedroom is 360 square feet. Her parent's room is 324 square feet. Who had the bigger room?

360 is bigger than 324 so Marion's room is bigger

3. Alexander Ramsey came to Minnesota when he was 33 years old, and Minnesota became a state when he was 44. How many years was Alex here before Minnesota was a state?

44 years - 33 years = 11 years

4. Alexander Ramsey bought fish for 32 cents and milk for $1.32. How much did he pay for the fish and milk together?

$1.32 + $.32 = $1.64
Objective: To experience nineteenth century school work and literature.
To think critically about social lessons and values.

Choose one or more activities to use with
McGuffey's Reader or Struwwelpeter

~ Discuss (in small groups, as a whole group, or individually through journaling) what lessons these stories are trying to teach.

  - Do the consequences the children receive make sense? Can you think of some better consequences?

  - Many adults in the nineteenth century thought that frightening children with outrageous consequences was a good way to teach them. Do you agree?

  - Would these stories keep you from doing what the children in the stories did? Why or why not?

~ Draw/paint illustrations for these stories.

~ Act out the stories for your class or another class.

~ Write or act out a story that teaches the same lesson, but that takes place today instead of in the nineteenth century.

  - How would the situation or problem be similar or different?
  - How would the consequences be similar or different?
"Here, Charlotte," said Mamma one day,
"These stockings knit while I'm away;
And should you fail, be sure you'll find
Mamma is strict, although she's kind."

But Charlotte took a lazy fit,
And did not feel inclined to knit;
And soon upon the ground let fall
Needles, and worsted, hose, and all.

"I shall not knit" said she "not I;
At least not now, but by and by;"
Then stretched, and yawned, and rubbed her eyes,
Like sluggards, when' tis time to rise.

But when Mamma came home, and found
The work all strewed upon the ground,
Quoth she, "You will not knit, and so
To school barefooted you shall go."

This put poor Charlotte in a fright,
And though she knew it served her right,
She wept, and begged, and prayed; but still
She could not change her mother's will.

To school, where all were spruce and neat,
Poor Charlotte went with naked feet.
Some showed their pity, some their pride,
While Charlotte hid her face and cried.

- From Struwwelpeter
McGuffey’s Readers

Many school children in the nineteenth century learned to read using McGuffey’s readers. Lessons about how to behave were also common in their readings.

LESSON XXIV.

Beautiful Hands.

1. “O Miss Roberts! what coarse-looking hands Mary Jessup has!” said Daisy Marvin, as she walked home from school with her teacher.

2. “In my opinion, Daisy, Mary’s hands are the prettiest in the class.”

3. “Why, Miss Roberts, they are as red and hard as they can be. How they would look if she were to try to play on a piano!” exclaimed Daisy.

4. Miss Roberts took Daisy’s hands in hers, and said, “Your hands are very soft and white, Daisy—just the hands to look beautiful on a piano; yet they lack one beauty that Mary’s hands have. Shall I tell you what the difference is?”

5. “Yes, please, Miss Roberts.”

6. “Well, Daisy, Mary’s hands are always busy. They wash dishes; they make fires; they hang out clothes, and help to wash them, too; they sweep, and dust, and sew; they are always trying to help her poor, hard-working mother.

7. “Besides, they wash and dress the children; they mend their toys and dress their dolls; yet, they find time to bathe the head of the little girl who is so sick in the next house to theirs.

8. “They are full of good deeds to every living thing. I have seen them patting the tired horse and the lame dog in the street.

They are always ready to help those who need help.”

9. “I shall never think Mary’s hands are ugly any more, Miss Roberts.”

10. “I am glad to hear you say that, Daisy; and I must tell you that they are beautiful because they do their work gladly and cheerfully.”

11. “O Miss Roberts! I feel so ashamed of myself, and so sorry,” said Daisy, looking into her teacher’s face with tearful eyes.

12. “Then, my dear, show your sorrow by deeds of kindness. The good alone are really beautiful.”
McGuffey's Readers

Many school children in the nineteenth century learned to read using McGuffey's readers. Lessons about how to behave were also common in their readings.

THIRD READER.

LESSON VII.

falsely at tend' try'ant con'duct there'fore

guilty haste reg'u lar strug'gled ig'no rant

THE TRUANT.

1. James Brown was ten years old when his parents sent him to school. It was not far from his home, and therefore they sent him by himself.

2. But, instead of going to school, he was in the habit of playing truant. He would go into the fields, or spend his time with idle boys.

3. But this was not all. When he went home, he would falsely tell his mother that he had been to school, and had said his lessons very well.

4. One fine morning, his mother told James to make haste home from school, for she wished, after he had come back, to take him to his aunt's.

5. But, instead of minding her, he went off to the water, where there were some boats. There he met plenty of idle boys.

6. Some of these boys found that James had money, which his aunt had given him; and he was led by them to hire a boat, and to go with them upon the water.

7. Little did James think of the danger into which he was running. Soon the wind began to blow, and none of them knew how to manage the boat.

8. For some time, they struggled against the wind and the tide. At last, they became so tired that they could row no longer.

9. A large wave upset the boat, and they were all thrown into the water. Think of James Brown, the truant, at this time!

10. He was far from home, known by no one. His parents were ignorant of his danger. He was struggling in the water, on the point of being drowned.

11. Some men, however, saw the boys, and went out to them in a boat. They reached them just in time to save them from a watery grave.

12. They were taken into a house, where their clothes were dried. After a while, they were sent home to their parents.

13. James was very sorry for his conduct and he was never known to be guilty of the same thing again.

14. He became regular at school, learned to attend to his books, and, above all, to obey his parents perfectly.

**Etiquette of the Table**

**Objective:** To examine table manners with an historical perspective, to build confidence and group cohesion through drama.

**Background Information**

In Victorian times table manners were extremely important, and children learned them from parents, governesses, and books of etiquette.

**Activity**

Brainstorm a list of table manners which modern children are expected to follow. Share the attached list of manners from *Never Give a Lady a Restive Horse* by Thomas E. Hill. Allow a few moments for the children to peruse them and ask questions about the confusing ones.

In pairs, have students choose a manner to act out, with or without words. Once the pair is ready, they perform their skits in front of the group. The rest of the group takes turns guessing until they discover the right manner.

**Discussion Questions:**

~ Which manners are we still familiar with today?
~ Which manners are different from today?
~ Which of the manners would be the hardest for you to follow if you were growing up in Victorian times? Why?
~ Would you like to attend a proper Victorian dinner party? Why or why not?

Try to eat a meal using proper Victorian manners!
Etiquette of the Table

Don’t pick up your fork or knife until you have been served.

Eat slowly to enjoy Better health, Greater wealth, Longer Life & More happiness.

Take what you are served even if you don’t like it, because Eccentricity should be avoided at the table.

Try to keep the tablecloth clean.

We no longer put knives in our mouths, as was formerly the custom.

Punctuality is necessary.

Ladies sit down before the gentlemen.

Do not study or smell the food before you take it.

As you take the food, make no special comments or praise over it.

Do not talk with your mouth full.

Do not fill your mouth too full.

Do not open your mouth while chewing.

Do not leave the table with food in your mouth.

Do not put your hand in your mouth while eating.

Do not cut bread, break it instead.

Feel free to take the last piece, there is probably more.

Use your napkin frequently.

Don’t wear gloves at the table.

Feel free to eat the corn off the cob.

Leave the table to sneeze or cough.

Remove bones or cherry pits from your mouth with your fork, not your fingers.

Don’t curl your feet under your chair.

Don’t stretch your feet out so far under the table that they touch someone else’s.
Victorian Children’s Games

Anita, Ramsey and Laura, the children who grew up in the Ramsey House, played games like these!

Parlor Games (to be played indoors)

Quakers

This is a friendly morning greeting activity!

Setup: Players seated in a circle.

Method: One player turns to his/her neighbor, and chants: “Neighbor, neighbor, how are thee?”
   The response is: “Very well, I thank thee.”
   “How is neighbor next to thee?”
   “I don’t know but I’ll go see.”
   And so the play continues around the circle.

Shadow Verbs

Shadow Verbs is not only a fun excuse to do some acting, but is also a nice review of verbs! This dramatic game is called a “Quiet Game For Hot Weather” by The American Girls Handy Book, but can be played any time of the year.

Setup: For a truly Victorian feel, hang a white sheet, with a large lamp behind it, so that the action can be seen in silhouette. Or have the students simply act in front of the class.

Method: Two students, the “actors,” leave the room, and the rest of the class decides on a verb to mime, and a word with which it rhymes. They then call the actors back in, and tell them: “The verb we have chosen rhymes with __________.” The actors consult on what their first guess will be, and step in front of the class, (or between the lamp and the sheet, if being done in silhouette) and mime the action. For example, if the class had given them the word “lake” they might mime "bake."

If the actors have guessed the proper verb, the class claps their hands and a new pair of actors is chosen. If not, the class clucks their tongues, and the actors consult on their next guess. (It might be a good strategy to choose guesses in alphabetical order!)

Earth, Air, Fire, and Water

Setup: Players sitting in a circle. One player, the Roller, sits with a soft, small ball in the center.

Method: The Roller rolls the ball to someone and calls out: “Water!” The player who received the ball must instantly call out an animal that lives in the water. If s/he cannot name a water animal before the Roller counts to 10, s/he becomes the Roller. If air or earth is called, one must name an animal living there, and in the case of fire, something that can exist in fire.
RING ON A STRING

Setup: Players in a circle, a string being held by all players with a ring or a washer on it, and one Guesser in the center.

Method: The Guesser must guess who has the ring. The players are constantly passing the ring around the circle and pretending to be passing it if they do not have it. The Guesser has 3 chances to find it, whomever is correctly guessed, or the last incorrectly guessed player becomes the Guesser.

KITTIE WANTS A CORNER

Setup: Players standing in a circle, “Kitty” in the center.

Method: Kitty tells one of the players: “Kitty wants a corner,” and the reply is always: “Ask my neighbor,” and so Kitty must ask another. All the while, the other players are making silent deals with each other to swap spots in the circle, and are crossing the circle to do so. Kitty tries to take these spots before they are filled, and the player left without a spot is the new Kitty.

POOR KITTY

Setup: Players sitting in a circle, “Kitty” in the center.

Method: Kitty crawls around the circle, chooses a player, and “meows,” looking like a sad Kitty. The player says: “Poor Kitty!” (without smiling!) 3 times. If a smile appears, that player becomes Kitty.

CATERPILLAR

Setup: Enough chairs for each player in a circle.

Method: One player walks to the center of the circle, while the rest find seats. Once everyone is seated, players shift around the perimeter of the circle to fill whichever seat is vacant so that the middle person cannot sit in it. If the middle person does take the seat, the player to his/her left moves to the middle of the circle.

THIS IS MY EYE

Setup: Players sitting in a circle.

Method: One player points to his/her eye and calls it something else. The next player points to that body part and calls it yet another name.

Anita: (pointing to her eye) This is my chin, Ramsey.
Ramsey: (pointing to his chin) This is my thumb, Laura.
Laura: (pointing to her thumb) This is my nose, Minnie.
Minnie: (pointing to her cheek) This is my cheek, Nellie.

Minnie has made a mistake, and now must serve as a judge.
Teapot

Setup: 3 students in front of class.

Method: The 3 students secretly choose a common word to replace with an uncommon or old-fashioned word. For example, “pencil” is now “teapot.” They have a conversation in front of the class in which they substitute the word “teapot” for “pencil.” The rest of the class must try to guess which word had been substituted, and with what.

Marbles

Setup: A 9-inch circle drawn on the ground, each player has one marble inside the circle, and one for shooting.

Method: Players stand 6 feet from the circle and take turns rolling their marbles into it. If a player hits a marble out of the circle, s/he shoots again.

Lawn Games (to be played outdoors or in a gym)

Blind Man’s Bluff

Setup: Open field, one blindfolded player.

Method: The Blind Man is turned around 3 times, and then tries to tag the other players. Whoever is tagged becomes the Blind Man.

Blue Tom

Setup: Open field, everyone standing in a line on one side, with It in the middle, facing them.

Method: It yells: “Blue Tom!” 3 times, and everybody runs to the other side of the field. It tags whom s/he can, and they join It in the middle.
If It calls “Pink Tom” or “Blue James” and anyone makes a false start, they become It, and the game starts over. The same penalty applies if anyone It captured calls out “Blue Tom.”

Cross Tag

Setup: Open field, an It, and a Runner.

Method: The Runner is given a short head start before It chases. Others try to cross in between the two. If this happens, It yells the Crosser's name, and runs after him/her. Once a player is tagged, s/he becomes It.

Birds

Setup: Open field, a row of "birds" and It facing them.

Method: The teacher whispers a color in each player's ear, being sure to have some repeated colors. It calls out "Blue Bird!" and anyone whose color is blue tries to cross the field without being tagged. The first person tagged becomes the new It. If It calls a color that no one has, the teacher calls out "I haven't got any!" and chooses a new It.
**ST. PAUL**

**Setup:** Open field, 2 teams facing each other on opposite sides.

**Method:** Team 1 secretly agrees on an occupation, then Team 2 announces, “Here we come!” and marches toward Team 1.

Team 2: Where from?
Team 1: St. Paul!
Team 2: What’s your trade?

At this point both teams should be facing each other in the center of the field, and Team 1 mimes their occupation. Team 2 yells guesses, once someone guesses correctly, Team 1 shouts: “Yes!” and runs back to their start line, while Team 2 tries to tag them. Anyone tagged becomes part of the other team, and play is reversed.

**JUMP ROPE GAMES**

**Setup:** Long jump rope, 2 people turning the rope, rest of class in line to jump.

**Method:**
1) Jump rope from one foot to the other, singing:

   *Mammy, Daddy jumped the gutter,
   Loaf of bread and a pound of butter.*

2) Hold a stone in one hand. Jump 3 times.
   Put the stone on the ground. Jump 3 times.

3) One by one, everyone runs under the rope, jumps once, runs out.

4) Raise the rope higher after each jump.

When somebody misses a jump or touches the rope, s/he becomes a rope turner.
Victorian Art Activities

Objective: To create artwork which was designed for children in the nineteenth Century.

These “Living Cards” can be drawn or cut out from pictures. You may want to add texture such as tissue paper or pipe cleaner steam!

These pictures come from The American Girl’s Handy Book by Lina Beard and Adelia Beard, currently published by David R. Godine, Publisher.
**Victorian Art Activities**

**Objective:** To create artwork which was designed for children in the nineteenth Century.

Notice that the head in these pictures remains the same, while different bodies are attached! This “transformation Scrapbook” can be put into a flip-book, or can be loose sheets. The pictures can be drawn or cut out of a magazine. You may want to include Victorian fashions!

These pictures come from *The American Girl’s Handy Book* by Lina Beard and Adelia Beard, currently published by David R. Godine, Publisher.
Write a Thank You Note

**Objective:** To take part in an act of etiquette, to give the Alexander Ramsey House feedback on your experience.

**Background Information**

Proper Victorians knew the importance of writing to each other. It meant that they would be remembered and it expressed their gratitude.

**Activity**

Practice this area of etiquette by thanking the Ramsey House for your tour. In your note, include something you learned, something you enjoyed, and something you would like to know or experience.

Once you have written this note, think of someone else in your life who might appreciate a thank you note!