Alexander Ramsey House

Pre-Visit Materials
Scouts

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!
The Ramsey Family

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!

- **Thomas Ramsey** (1784-1826)
- **Elizabeth Kelker** (1791-1853)
- **Michael Hutchinson Jenks** (1795-1867)
- **Mary Ridgway Earl** (1798-1867)

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+--------------------------+--------------------------+--------------------------+--------------------------+
| Thomas Ramsey            | Elizabeth Kelker         | Michael Hutchinson Jenks | Mary Ridgway Earl        |
| 1784-1826                | 1791-1853                | 1795-1867                | 1798-1867                |
+--------------------------+--------------------------+--------------------------+--------------------------+
| Alexander Ramsey         | Anna Earl Jenks          | Hannah Earl Jenks Crouch |
| 1815-1903                | 1826-1884                | 1825-1902                |
|                          |                          |                          |
+--------------------------+--------------------------+--------------------------+
| Alexander "Sonny" Ramsey | William Henry Ramsey     | Marlon Ramsey            |
| 1846-1850                | 1850-1851                | 1853-1935 & Charles Elliot Furness 1844-1909 |
|                          |                          |                          |
+--------------------------+--------------------------+--------------------------+
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The Ramsey/Furness Family Picture
1. How many people in the Ramsey family were named Alexander?______________________________

2. When Alexander, Anna, and Marion Ramsey moved into the mansion, Marion was 19 years old.
   What year was that?_______________________________________________________________

3. Anita's full name was Anna Ramsey Earl Furness. Name all the people she could have been named for
   and their relationships to her._____________________________________________________

4. Often "Aunt Hannah" took care of Anita, Ramsey, and Laura. Whose aunt was she?______________

5. How old was Anita when Laura was born?_____________________________________________

6. How old was the Ramsey House when Anita died?______________________________________

7. What would Laura call Thomas Ramsey?______________________________________________
Victorian Houses

Name: ____________________

Objectives: To understand that home architecture is influenced by individual families and by society. To see and create a house plan from bird's eye perspective.

Background Information

Alexander and Anna Ramsey planned their house carefully. They planned to have many parties, so they made a room for that. They planned to have servants, so they separated the kitchen from the rest of their house. What would you think about if you were planning your own “Mansion House”?

Activity

Look at the blueprint for the Ramseys’ first floor.

1. In red, circle the names of the rooms for servants.
2. In green, underline the rooms for guests.
3. In blue, put a dot in rooms you would want in your house.
4. In yellow, put a star in rooms you would not want.

Which room does a guest enter in the Ramsey House? _________________________________________

Which room would you want your guests to enter? ____________________________________________

Which room would you spend the most time in? ____________________________________________

Would you want that room in the front or the back of the house? Why?_______________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

What special rooms are the Ramseys missing that you would want in your house?
_______________________________________________________________________________________

Where would you put your special rooms? Why?____________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

On the back of the Ramseys’ blueprint, draw the first floor of your Mansion House.
Do not forget to include doors and hallways!

Minnesota Historical Society
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!
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.
Baking in the Nineteenth Century

Objectives: To introduce changes in domestic science, practice cooking, and work with measurements.

Background Information

If you have made cookies, you probably measured in cups and teaspoons. In the Ramseys' time, a recipe might have called for "one goblet of flour." A goblet is a water glass. The Ramsey's goblet may have been a different size than their neighbor's goblet, so they would use a different amount of flour, and their cookies would not turn out the same. In order to make sure that this didn't happen, recipes started using weight as a way to measure ingredients.

Anna Ramsey saved her cookbooks with many cookie recipes. On the Activity Sheet is a sugar cookie recipe from Mrs. Parloa's New Cookbook (by Maria Parloa, Boston, 1880) and a modern recipe.

Split the group in two and have each group make one of the recipes to share with the other group. Compare the tastes and discuss the following questions:

a. Which recipe do you like better?
b. Why do you think the recipe has changed over the years?
c. Was it easy to work in a group? What was helpful and what was difficult?

1880s Sugar Cookies

1 cup sugar
½ cup butter
1½ cups flour
½ tsp. baking powder dissolved in 2 tsp. milk
1 egg yolk
Flavor to taste
Roll thin, cut out, brush egg white and water on cookies, & bake in quick oven.

Modern Sugar Cookies

1 cup sugar
½ cup butter
½ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
1 egg
½ teaspoon vanilla
1 tablespoon cream or milk
2 cups sifted flour
Cream butter and sugar. Add beaten egg. Add salt, baking powder and vanilla. Add 1 cup flour and 1 tbsp. milk. Stir in rest of flour. Roll cookie dough on floured surface to 1/8 in. thick. Brush egg wash (egg white and 1 tsp. water) on the cookies; sprinkle with sugar. Bake at 375° F until golden brown, 8-10 minutes.
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.

KITTY 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 steams!

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.
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!