

**Program Description**

The *History Detectives* program encourages students to explore Brucemore and Cedar Rapids history by challenging them to sleuth for clues. Students use observation skills to detect the daily activities and special interests of the Douglas family and their servant and grounds staff. The program reaches beyond the history of the estate by examining national trends following the turn-of-the-century and the growth of Cedar Rapids as an industrial city.

With connections to local and national history, geography, language arts, fine arts, and music, *History Detectives* provides an interdisciplinary approach that supports many learning styles. The program aids students in the development of skills that can be applied to classroom learning. Students further develop learning and thinking skills by examining objects, furniture, rooms, the landscape, and Visitor Center exhibitions to make conclusions about the issues that shaped daily life at Brucemore and beyond.

**Student Activities and Goals:**

- ◆ Examine rooms in the mansion, objects, photographs, the landscape, and exhibitions to learn about the lifestyles of people who lived and worked at Brucemore.
- ◆ Better understand relationships between the Douglas family and their servant staff.
- ◆ Consider the methods used by historians and apply these techniques to gather information about Brucemore.
- ◆ Understand Brucemore as an example of local and national trends relating to industry, technology, and the arts.
- ◆ Develop observation skills and make conclusions based on their observations.
- ◆ Use writing skills and artistic means to express their ideas about Brucemore.

**Method-**

Guides use an inquiry/discussion technique that encourages students to further develop looking and thinking skills. Guides are responsible for leading discussions, focusing students' attention, and aiding students in making observations and conclusions.

**Program Flow and Highlights-**

**Introduction:** Upon arrival, students should be in groups of approximately twelve. In these smaller groups, guides provide a brief background on the history of Brucemore and the three families who called the estate "home." Students discuss how historians find information, what they anticipate learning during their visit, and how to look for clues on the grounds, in the mansion, and in the exhibition spaces. Groups move through three areas of the estate: the Visitor Center, grounds, and mansion.

**Visitor Center:** Students complete an exhibit sheet as they examine the "Families of Brucemore" exhibit. The exhibit includes a model of the estate, videos, photographs, and objects that reflect the lifestyles of the families. A temporary exhibit provides a detailed look at one aspect of Brucemore's history. Guides provide support as students work individually or in small groups.

**Grounds:** Students take an exploratory walk on the estate including the pond, pet cemetery, formal garden, greenhouse, and servants' duplex. The group discusses how people shape their environments to fit their needs and interests.

**Mansion:** As the group moves through family and servant spaces, students search for clues about daily life in the mansion. Themes such as music, art, technology, and entertainment illustrate early 20<sup>th</sup> century trends. Highlights include the family's phonograph, portraits, a hand-painted mural, pipe organ, and an early electric refrigerator.

## Suggested Pre-visit Activities

1. Introduce students to Bruce more by reading and discussing “The Story of Bruce more” essay. Print the essay from the Student Resources page of the Education section on [www.bruce more.org](http://www.bruce more.org). Create a graphic organizer as a visual reference for the three families of Bruce more. Students should focus on the Douglasses and discuss the experiences of the three girls growing up in the early 1900s.
2. Work with students as they explore [www.bruce more.org](http://www.bruce more.org). As a class, take virtual tours of the mansion, gardens and grounds, and history. The virtual tours are found in the Your Visit section of the website. Discuss with students what they will see and do during their visit to the Bruce more estate. Following this introduction, students should work in small groups to explore a specific portion of the History section—one group for the Sinclairs, two groups for the Douglasses, and two groups for the Halls. Each group should present their section to the class.
3. Activities for children can be printed from the Kids Corner page of the Education section. Children will meet the Bruce more history detective team directed by Sherlock Leo. The activities (“missions”) include a word search, coloring page, visual comparisons of the mansion, “who did it” questions, and fact finding worksheet.
4. Look for multiple ways to connect classroom learning with the study of Bruce more. Discuss Cedar Rapids and Iowa history. On a national level, consider industrialization, advancements in technology (transportation, entertainment, housing, etc.), architectural styles, and immigration and the employment of immigrants in factories and as domestic servants. The Douglasses’ association with Grant Wood provides a connection to art. Bruce more’s location and the placement of the families’ businesses can be examined as part of a geography lesson. For more information on any of these topics, contact Bruce more at 319-362-7375 or email [mail@bruce more.org](mailto:mail@bruce more.org).
5. Before visiting Bruce more, find out what other museums students have toured. As a class, talk about what a museum is and list examples in your community. What can you do in a museum? What shouldn’t you do in a museum? Why are museums important?
6. As a class, research circa 1900 children’s games, toys, activities, clothing, education, and work (both within and outside of the home). Make a chart comparing childhood in the year 1900 and the year 2000. How do the two time periods compare? Students can try historic games such as The Minister’s Cat, My Lady’s Lap Dog, and Beast, Bird, or Fist. *Games for the playground, home, school and gymnasium*, by Jessie Hubbell Bancroft, published in 1913, contains the rules for these games and other activities.
7. Keeping a diary, taking photographs, and creating scrapbooks are all methods of documenting both daily experiences and special occasions. Students can create their own scrapbook page on construction paper with collage materials. Examples of scrapbook pages by Margaret Douglas are included in the following pages. If you would like Bruce more postcards to use for this activity, please request them when you schedule your tour.
8. Students should consider the sources historians use to gather information—photographs, diaries, letters, objects, buildings, the environment, etc. As a class, read passages from the following transcriptions of diary entries and letters and examine other primary sources (first-hand) such as scrapbook and photo album pages. Students should work in groups to answer the questions corresponding to each source. The sources include pages from Margaret Douglas’s childhood diary and scrapbook, letters from Danny the Nanny, and pages from the Douglasses’ photo albums.

**Margaret Douglas**  
**1909 Diary (age 12)**  
**Transcriptions**

- 7/5 “Celebrated 4<sup>th</sup> of July, shot firecrackers with Margaret Powell and went to Country Club to see fireworks”
- 7/25 “Sunday We went to the Methodist church in the morning. Some of the girls came over and we at[e] candy and cut paper dolls most of the afternoon. We all went to song service after supper and we danced until nine o'clock. I slept out on the porch.”
- 10/16 “I went to music with Mag P. she came up for dinner they all came up to play. We had a leave fight most all afternoon. The girls stayed quite late. Did my arith after supper.”
- 10/30 “I went to (school) music with M. P. My pony came in the morning. I rode him out to Beavers Park. In the afternoon I went to Mag D. Halloween party. After supper we went out until ten o'clock. Danny went with us. It was Ellen's birthday.”
- 12/14 “Tuesday My Birthday I went to school in the morning and mother gave me 13 silver dollars. In the afternoon all the girls went for a bob ride in Mr. Hamwites wagon. All six of the girls stayed all night. We had 13 candles. My pony [sic] was my present.”
- 12/25 “We all went to breakfast real early and then went in and had all our presents. I got lots of lovely things we had plum pudding for dinner in the afternoon the boys went to Marion on the bob with the poney. In the evening we played “pickles” with the boys. It turned lots colder that evening.”

- 1. What activities did Margaret and her friends enjoy?**
- 2. How does Margaret celebrate her birthday?**
- 3. How is Margaret's life different from yours today?**

**Ella McDannel (“Danny”)  
1910 Diary  
Transcriptions**

- 1/11 “Tuesday – Mrs. D and I went to town in the sleigh. Then Ellen and I were to Mrs. Niles for lunch. Margaret and I made candy in the evening, rather mild, thawing.”
- 1/23 “Barbara is thirteen months old today and has a vocabulary of twenty words and stands alone.”
- 2/21 “Monday – Mrs. D and I walked to Bever Park. Cold + clear. Mrs. D took Margaret and I to Opera House to see ‘The Servant of the House.’ In afternoon Babies and I called at the Wallaces. Mrs. W. sister and baby visiting here.”
- 3/7 “Tuesday – Went to town with Mrs. D in auto. Then cleaned closets. Nora out with Baby. In evening Margaret and I went to a musical at Library given for ‘Children’s Nursery.’”
- 3/10 “Friday. Ellen is learning to use her roller skates. Out driving in p.m. and brought Miss Smyth home with us and Alice made us a cup of tea.”
- 3/21 “Monday. Mrs. D and I walked over to factory came back in auto and did some errands downtown. Gave baby her bath before breakfast and she did not like it took her nap well and I will try bath in evening.”
- 5/3 “Tuesday – A nice bright day – Out auto riding in p.m. Walked to Bever Park in morning. Baby realized she could walk today. Mrs. D to Mrs. Bolton’s to lunch and to Dr. Ristine’s to dinner.”
- 7/22 “Went up to see moving pictures in the evening.”
- 11/1 “We sent the children out with Johanna and I washed Margaret’s hair.”

- 1. What jobs did Ella McDannel, also called “Danny,” do for the Douglasses?**
- 2. How did Danny spend her free time?**
- 3. What activities did the Douglasses enjoy?**
- 4. How do you think Danny felt about working for the Douglasses?**

**Irene Douglas  
1912 Diary  
Transcriptions**

- 1/1 "Happy New Year for all at Brucemore – Margaret and I spent a.m. packing her trunk. Miss Putnam's party for her dancing class in p.m. Mrs. Ed Clark's dinner in eve. Charity Ball."
- 1/23 "Very sick and throat painful – Doctor came twice. George stayed home from the office with me."
- 3/28 "Danny + I motored over to country club with the children + then rode horseback over mountain drive."
- 4/1 "Margaret developed measles – very sick – Danny in charge of the case."
- 4/15 "The news of the Titanic disaster came at noon while we were at luncheon. Did not seem serious until evening about 7:30."
- 4/16 "This morning was spent frantically answering telephones and telegrams – No news from Walter"
- 4/18 "Carpathia landed 9 in the eve. Walter not with Mahala."
- 4/19 "Spent the morning answering telephone, telegrams, letters, flowers, etc. Mahala gave her testimony to Senators Smith and Newlands."
- 7/3 "Margaret learning to cook – made cake with Danny"
- 7/29 "Beautiful weather – cool but clear. Margaret's party in eve. Lotto with prizes for everybody."
- 8/7 "Danny and I worked on book keeping all a.m."
- 8/14 "Spent most of the day with the children very strenuous with Danny"
- 9/12 "Margaret and Danny + George left for Chicago this afternoon – no tears until they were out of sight."
- 9/20 "Rainy morning – Danny's birthday – Margaret baked her a cake."
- 10/23 "Ellen had a music less[on]. Worked all day planting – enjoyed every minute of it."
- 12/4 "Wednesday – rainy + mild – Danny + I went to town + finished the Christmas shopping – P.C. girls came for squash finished my third history in the bindery."
- 12/25 "Family all assembled at breakfast -- Tree and presents afterwards. Mother telephoned twice -- Very cheerful and nice Xmas day in spirit of sadness over Father's death."

- 1. List the activities that Irene does with her children. Do you think parents and their children do the same things today? Explain.**
- 2. What are some of Irene's hobbies?**
- 3. What kinds of activities did Irene and Danny do together?**
- 4. Walter Douglas (George's brother) and his wife Mahala were on the Titanic. How many days pass before Irene seems to know what happened to them? How do you think Irene felt during that time?**
- 5. What does Irene's diary tell us about her and her family?**

**Letter from Ella McDannel (Danny) to Margaret Douglas Hall  
Following the death of Irene Douglas (Margaret's mother)**

1804 Cleveland Ave.  
Jan. 19<sup>th</sup> 1937

Dearest Margaret:

Your nice little note came today and I was so happy to hear from you- Bee is with me and we keep talking about you all, and are so anxious for details. Of course we had the papers and I thought it was a wonderful write up.

But I wonder if Mother knew she was so ill and if she had a nurse or if she was up and about as usual. I had such a sweet letter soon after Christmas and I wondered if she got my last letter.

I just can't believe she is gone and keep thinking she should be in Pasadena – now Barbara dear had made such plans on her being with her this winter.

Well, I am glad (if she had to go) that she was in her own home and every thing would be done as she would have liked to have it.

I wish I could have been with you yet I am happy to remember as I saw her last winter. She was very happy over the new baby coming and arrival --- was she buried in one of her own gowns-

I know you are very busy now Margaret. But won't you write me often I am going to miss your Mother's letters dreadfully-

I am so glad Howard is better will you be going to Florida this winter and will you be moving over in the big house- Of course I knew it was to be yours-

Rossy telephoned this evening to know if I had had any news and I was glad to tell her I had heard from you-

What are Ellen's plans – I hope she will come to California and I wish you would come too.

We have had a very cold winter for California-

Alice I. Wrote how lovely the cemetery looked she drove out at sunset on Saturday- she said the flowers were banked high on the beautiful white snow-

I know your heart and hands are full dear- but it is all for the best – God doeth all things well-

I will love hearing from you any time- and I am always your loving

Danny

- 1. This letter was written seven years after Danny worked for the Douglasses. What does this letter tell us about Danny and her feelings towards the family?**
- 2. How do you know Margaret will become the new owner of Brucemore?**

Margaret Douglas  
Scrapbook Pages

Home Sweet Home



"Bye more"



The Swans  
"The Swans and Repose"



The Garden





SandyLAND Beach.





French Portraits.



Be God at recess.  
Tuesday Jan. 14<sup>th</sup>



The Hampton Quartet.

"Home of the Quaker Oats"  
Cedar Rapids Iowa.



New York City

Jan. 27<sup>th</sup> 1914

Saw  
fish and  
Perlmutter  
Jan. 18<sup>th</sup> 1914.



Advised  
Monday  
1914

AVAILABLE BY

# TELEGRAM

IT WILL HURRY YOUR ANSWER  
to give it to the boy who delivers this telegram

Margaret Douglas  
26 West 55<sup>th</sup>  
Paid

SPECIAL RUSH SERVICE

TRADE MARK



**FOR MISS MARGARET DOUGLAS.**  
Mrs. George Bruce Douglas entertained the girls of the F. C. club and as many boys Saturday evening for her daughter Margaret, who is at home from school for the Easter vacation. Dancing was the amusement provided for the young people.



MR  
BOB



Presented by  
GLASS of '12

Our Picnic at The Bronx, N.Y.



### Margaret Douglas's scrapbook

1. What kinds of items did Margaret keep in her scrapbook?
2. What does the scrapbook tell us about Margaret?
3. What would you put in a scrapbook? How would your scrapbook compare to Margaret's?

**Douglas Family  
Photo Album**











### **Pages from the Douglas Family Photo Album**

- 1. From looking at these photos, what activities did kids enjoy in the early 1900s?**
- 2. What did kids wear for play clothes? How do their clothes compare to yours today?**
- 3. How would you describe growing up in the early 1900s?**
- 4. What do you think it was like to live at Brucemore?**