



## Local History: This was somebody's playhouse?

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### Resource Guide

#### Summary:

- **Recommended grade level:** 2 - 5
- **Classroom activity:** 1 - 2 hours
- **Site visit:** 1 hour
- **Benchmarks:** Social Studies, Reading and Language Arts
- **Subjects:** Architecture, mathematics, historic preservation, history, growth of Florida
- **Skills:** History inquiry and analysis, prewriting, drafting, persuasive and informational text, listening and speaking
- **Objectives:** Students will hypothesize about DeBary Hall. Students will analyze text and technical resources about DeBary Hall's history. Students will locate, explain and use information from text features to reach conclusions about DeBary Hall.

#### Materials:

- *Learn and Tour Lessons – Local History: This was somebody's playhouse?* lesson booklet
- *This was somebody's playhouse?* exhibit display panel
- Multi-media disk
- Paper
- Pen or pencil

#### Background:

In 1871, Frederick deBary built a home along the St. Johns River for relaxation and pleasure. He invited his friends and family to visit DeBary Hall during the winter months to escape the cold weather in the North. Visitors enjoyed hunting, fishing, relaxing and swimming in a spring-fed pool. DeBary built his home so he and his friends could enjoy their vacations. He added an elevator to carry their luggage upstairs, extra bedrooms and bathrooms, servant call buttons in each room, and a larger dining room! His surrounding land had plenty of animals to hunt and fresh cool spring water to swim in.

#### Activities:

1. Using the panel titled "This was somebody's playhouse?" have students describe why DeBary Hall was built and what it could have been used for. Engage the students with prompt questions: What might the rooms have in them? What might the yard look like? What changes do you notice? Why might that be? What type of person may have lived here? What do you think they did for a living?
2. Using the DeBary Hall Historic Site multimedia presentation CD, explore THE ESTATE selection. Have the students take notes as you review the presentation and note what kind of people worked at DeBary Hall, what other buildings were on the property, and how the estate changed over time.
3. Have students write a first-person letter, as Mr. DeBary, to a friend in New York. The letter should be a persuasive and informative document detailing DeBary Hall's positive qualities while convincing the

acquaintance to visit the Florida estate. The students should use their notes and earlier conversation topics to help draft the letter.

4. Students will focus on leisure and past times of the Victorian period during the tour segment of this lesson. They will experience and participate in a historic lawn game such as croquet and play several parlor games that Victorian children would have played.

### **Assessment:**

In this lesson, students will improve persuasive writing skills and word choices. Students will study how word choices can make a sentence more persuasive or make a place more appealing. This lesson encourages dialogue in the classroom as you and your class discuss effective advertising they have seen on television or in magazines and what words make those advertisements stronger. This lesson also encourages creative writing as they write a first-person letter from another person's perspective.

### **Extension ideas:**

1. To improve writing skills, have the students review their letters for grammar and spelling mistakes and rewrite the letters if necessary.
2. Compare advertising media. Pay attention to slogans, catch phrases and how words are written. What adjectives are most effective to describe products and which are the least appealing? Discuss how words or terms can change a place's reputation or appearance. What words appear most often in advertising?
3. Have the students draft another persuasive letter about DeBary Hall after their tour. What details did they add in this letter that they did not add before? Why?

### **Benchmarks**

Social Studies	Reading and Language Arts
SS.4.A.1.1	LA.4.1.4.3
SS.4.A.1.2	LA.4.1.7.1
	LA.4.2.2.1
	LA.4.2.2.4
	LA.4.3.1.1
	LA.4.3.1.2
	LA.4.3.2.1
	LA.4.3.2.2
	LA.4.3.3.1
	LA.4.3.4.1
	LA.4.3.4.2
	LA.4.3.4.3
	LA.4.4.2.2
	LA.4.4.3.1
	LA.4.4.3.2
	LA.4.5.2.1
	LA.4.5.2.3
	LA.4.5.2.4
	LA.4.6.1.1