



## **THE RAMSEY PIANO**

### **PODCAST TRANSCRIPT**

MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT: “Prelude in C Major” by Johann Sebastian Bach

I’m Cindy Olsen, Acting Site Manager for the Alexander Ramsey House. In 1872, Governor Ramsey purchased this Steinway grand piano for his daughter, Marian. A devoted music aficionado, Marian enjoyed playing the instrument. It’s been in the house ever since, and we still play it today during special programs.

In 2008, the piano underwent significant conservation treatment. The keyboard and action were removed, the hammers were re-shaped, and moving parts were adjusted and lubricated to reduce friction.

Most significantly, a humidity regulation system was installed to help preserve the piano’s rosewood case and components. Changes in humidity cause the wood to shrink and swell, altering tension on the strings and changing the instrument’s pitch. The new system keeps the piano at a stable humidity level.

We tune the piano twice a year, to correct pitch irregularities and to catch small problems before they become big ones.

Not every object is restored to working condition, but some pieces at Historic Sites – like this piano – are used to help interpret a period environment. Our regular maintenance procedures ensure that the Ramsey piano is preserved in the best-possible condition, and that it remains something not just to be seen, but also to be heard.

