



NEWS RELEASE

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[For Immediate Release](#)

THE FRICK PITTSBURGH PRESENTS MY DEAREST: LOVE & COURTSHIP IN THE GILDED AGE

New thematic tour of Clayton offered February 4 through April 5, 2020

PITTSBURGH, PA, January 29, 2020 — Have you ever wondered what dating was like 100 years ago? Beginning Tuesday, February 4, The Frick Pittsburgh will answer this question and more through *My Dearest: Love and Courtship in the Gilded Age*, a special tour of Clayton, the historic Frick family home, centering around the courting customs of the American Victorian era. Focusing on Henry Clay Frick and Adelaide Howard Childs (known as Clay and Ada to their friends and family), this special tour tells the story of their courtship and marriage within the context of the period. Artifacts, photographs, archival documents, and newspaper articles will illustrate the proper etiquette for courting, announcing an engagement (or breaking one off), and preparing for a wedding in the late 1800s.

It is not known exactly how Clay and Ada met, but they were acquainted by the spring of 1881. Some sources suggest they were introduced by Frick's friend Andrew Mellon during the winter social season of 1880-1881. Charming handwritten notes from April 1881 attest to the growing connection between the couple. Frick writes: "Miss Ada, It has every appearance of being a pleasant evening, and if agreeable to

you, should like to join you for that horseback ride this evening at 7...Very sincerely, H.C. Frick." In another, "Miss Ada, I thank you very much for the beautiful Easter card received from you on Saturday, I prize it very highly. Will you accompany me to see Emma Abbott in 'Fra Diavolo' at Opera House Friday evening 22nd inst? Hoping for a favorable reply I am sincerely H.C. Frick."

By the end of the year, Henry and Adelaide were married. An engagement of a few months may seem brief today, but was customary in the 1800s. According to etiquette guidebooks, wedding invitations were sent four days to two weeks in advance—which seems rather short notice today! Henry and Adelaide's wedding, "one of the most notable weddings of the season," according to the *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette*, took place December 15, 1881 at the bride's family home. Two hundred guests attended the ceremony, which was followed by a "sumptuous repast" and dancing. The newlyweds left that evening to honeymoon in Boston and New York before settling into married life at the fashionable Monongahela House in Pittsburgh. (They purchased Clayton later that year).

Though dating customs and wedding etiquette have changed, well wishes for the new couple remain familiar. A few days after the wedding, Adelaide received a touching letter from her mother: "It makes my heart glad to know that you are so very happy. I have trusted you to one in whom I have great confidence, I know he will love and cherish you, we all love him. May the Lord send his richest blessing upon you both, is the earnest prayer of your devoted mother."

My Dearest will be offered daily at 11:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. from February 4 through April 5, 2020. Tour admission is free for Frick members; \$15 general admission, \$13 seniors, students, and military; \$8 children 16 and under. The tour will last for one hour and begins at the Grable Visitor Center. Advance ticket purchase is strongly recommended by calling 412-371-0600 or buying tickets online at TheFrickPittsburgh.org.

ABOUT CLAYTON

The home of the Henry Clay Frick family from 1882–1905, this meticulously restored 23-room mansion features an impressive array of fine and decorative art objects purchased by the Fricks. Docent-led tours of the home provide an inside view of daily life at the turn of the 20th century and a better understanding of Pittsburgh during the Gilded Age.

ABOUT THE FRICK PITTSBURGH

Located on the Pittsburgh estate of late-19th-century industrialist Henry Clay Frick, The Frick Pittsburgh is the steward of collections left as a legacy to the people of Pittsburgh by Frick's daughter, Helen Clay Frick. The permanent collections include fine and decorative arts, cars, carriages, historic objects, and buildings. The Frick experience includes The Frick Art Museum, the Car and Carriage Museum, Clayton, the Frick family Gilded Age mansion, and six acres of beautifully landscaped lawns and gardens. Also included are an Education Center, the Frick children's playhouse (designed by renowned architects Alden & Harlow), a large working greenhouse (also designed by Alden & Harlow), The Café at the Frick, and the Grable Visitor Center, which houses the Frick Museum Store.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Frick Pittsburgh is located at 7227 Reynolds Street in Pittsburgh's Point Breeze neighborhood. Free parking is available in the Frick's off-street lot or along adjacent streets. The Frick is open 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Tuesday–Sunday; 10:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m. Friday; and is closed Mondays and major holidays. The public should call 412-371-0600 for information, or visit the Frick online at TheFrickPittsburgh.org.

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