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The Frick Pittsburgh Wins National Award for New Historic Home Tour

PITTSBURGH – **The Frick Pittsburgh** was recently honored by the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) with an Award of Excellence for the museum’s **Signature Clayton Tour Experience: Gilded, Not Golden**, a recently reimagined presentation of the Frick family’s Gilded Age home. For nearly 80 years, AASLH has presented Leadership in History Awards in recognition of excellent contributions to the collection, preservation, and interpretation of state and local history in order to make the past more meaningful to all people. The Frick is one of only three museums in Pennsylvania to be recognized by AASLH in 2024.

The development of **Gilded, Not Golden** was a multi-year effort led by Frick Education and Curatorial staff, specialized museum consultants, and a curated advisory board with the goal of creating a visitor experience that more broadly and thoughtfully investigates life in 19th-century Pittsburgh. The tour, which situates visitors in the tumultuous year of 1892, marks the first comprehensive reimagining of the Clayton experience since the home opened to the public as a historic house museum in 1990.

“All of us at the Frick are humbled and excited to receive this prestigious award,” said **Elizabeth E. Barker, executive director of The Frick Pittsburgh**. “Our team’s thoughtful development of the new **Gilded, Not Golden** tour—with its broad focus on the experiences of everyday Pittsburghers in the Gilded Age—marks an important step in our ongoing work to foster an

environment of inclusivity and belonging on our campus. We're honored by AASLH's affirmation of our reinterpretation of Clayton."

"Gilded, Not Golden invites visitors to actively participate in a conversation about this important era in our history and to consider how the Pittsburgh we live in today was shaped by it," added **Kelsie Paul, manager of interpretation and engagement**. "Clayton is a unique and incredible historical resource, not just for understanding the lives of the people who lived there, but for appreciating the broader social history of our city. This honor from AASLH recognizes the work of everyone who helped to shape this new tour over the last several years, as well as the ongoing passion and skill of our tour facilitators, who bring this tour to life every day for our visitors."

"This award is extremely important, and would not be possible without the support of our brilliant interpretive consultants, the extraordinary advisory board, and the staff at the Frick who believed in this work," remarked **Amanda Gillen, director of learning & visitor experience**, "While the facts of history don't change, the lens through which we see them and the ways we make history available and accessible to the public do and should, and that's what this project to reimagine the tour of Clayton has been about."

The AASLH awards program was initiated in 1945 to establish and encourage standards of excellence in the collection, preservation, and interpretation of state and local history throughout the United States. The AASLH Leadership in History Awards not only honor significant achievement in the field of state and local history, but also bring public recognition of the opportunities for small and large organizations, institutions, and programs to make contributions in this arena.

About the Signature Clayton Tour Experience: Gilded, Not Golden

Guided tours of Clayton immerse visitors in the year 1892, a critical year for our nation, Pittsburgh, and the Frick family. Considered to be the height of the Gilded Age, the early 1890s brought the era's extremes into stark relief—both the progress of technological advancements and economic growth, and the harsher realities of issues like wealth disparity, social unrest, and environmental degradation. Nowhere were these extremes more pronounced than in Pittsburgh—America's industrial powerhouse and one of the era's most influential cities. Tours of Clayton explore how these extremes affected the lives of everyone who lived in Pittsburgh at the time, though in dramatically different ways.

The tour experience emphasizes the stories of real people—those who lived within Clayton's walls and those who did not. Visitors to Clayton should expect to participate in a dialogue alongside their guide and other visitors. Conversations will include discussions of a wide variety of historical experiences, not just those of the Frick family, as well as the ongoing legacy of the Gilded Age and its impact on our lives today.

Hours and Admission

The **Signature Clayton Experience: Gilded, Not Golden** is open to visitors Tuesday through Sunday, 10:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Tours last approximately 75 minutes and are most appropriate for children ages nine and up. Visitors should be aware that **Gilded, Not Golden** explores challenging topics including violence, grief, and child loss.

Gilded, Not Golden is free for Frick members; \$22 non-members; \$18 seniors aged 65+, post-secondary students, veterans and active-duty military, pre-K-12 teachers, and first responders; \$12 youth ages 17 and under; \$1 Museums for All and EBT access card users. Free for babies held in arms.

Accessibility

Only Clayton's first floor is wheelchair accessible. Video accommodations are available to those who are unable to visit the second floor.

Collaborators

The Frick would like to thank Michelle Moon and Rainey Tisdale, interpretive consultants, for their guidance and expert stewardship in the development of **Gilded, Not Golden**. We owe further thanks to the group of extraordinary museum professionals, educators, and scholars who served on the **Gilded, Not Golden** advisory board and were instrumental in the creation of the new tour experience. They are:

Ron Baraff, Director of Historic Resources and Facilities, Rivers of Steel
Dr. Rudi Batzel, Assistant Professor of History, Lake Forest College
Callie Hawkins, CEO and Executive Director, President Lincoln's Cottage
Ryan Henderson, Interpretive Specialist & Grant Writer, Rivers of Steel
Dr. Modupe Labode, Curator, National Museum of American History
Dr. Amanda Moniz, Curator of Philanthropy, National Museum of American History
Monica Montgomery, Community Engagement Manager, PHILADELPHIA250
Dr. Jessica Ramey, Associate Professor of Gender Studies, Chatham University
Doug Swanson, Assistant Professor of Writing, University of Pittsburgh
Dr. Sarah Weicksel, Director of Research and Publications, American Historical Association
Dr. Sylvia Rhor Samaniego, Director of the University Art Gallery, University of Pittsburgh
Sonnet Takahisa, Independent Educator, Arts and Cultural Strategies, Inc.
Dr. Nicole J. Williams, Curator of Collections, Preservation Society of Newport County

About The American Association for State and Local History

The American Association for State and Local History is a not-for-profit professional organization of individuals and institutions working to preserve and promote history. From its

headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee, AASLH provides leadership, service, and support for its members who preserve and interpret state and local history in order to make the past more meaningful to all people. AASLH publishes books, technical publications, a quarterly magazine, and maintains numerous affinity communities and committees serving a broad range of constituents across the historical community. The association also sponsors an annual meeting, regional and national training in-person workshops, and online training.

About Clayton

The home of the Henry Clay Frick family from 1882–1905, this meticulously preserved 23-room mansion reveals the lifestyle of a prominent, wealthy family who lived in Pittsburgh at the height of the city’s cultural and economic importance. Today, Clayton is the last remaining home of its kind in Pittsburgh, standing as a testament to another era and offering unique insights into our city’s past.

The Frick family—Henry Clay Frick, Adelaide Howard Childs Frick, and their children, Childs Frick, Martha Howard Frick, Helen Clay Frick, and Henry Clay Frick, Jr.—lived in Clayton during the Gilded Age, the forty-year period following the end of the American Civil War, a time of rapid, intense change that ushered in the modern era of the United States. Forces such as industrialization, urbanization, technological advances and immigration collided to fundamentally alter the American way of life—creating great wealth and progress, but also social upheaval and startling inequity that continue to impact our world today.

About The Frick Pittsburgh

The Frick Pittsburgh offers authentic experiences with art, history and nature that inspire and delight. Visitors of all ages and backgrounds are warmly welcomed to explore collections of fine and decorative arts, vehicles, historic objects, and buildings – including Clayton, the Frick family home and only intact Gilded Age mansion remaining from Pittsburgh’s Millionaire’s Row – left as a legacy to the people of Pittsburgh by Helen Clay Frick, daughter of noted industrialist and art collector Henry Clay Frick. Alongside these treasures, the Frick offers an active schedule of temporary exhibitions and programs on our 10-acre garden campus in the heart of Pittsburgh's East End. Information about The Frick Pittsburgh is available online at TheFrickPittsburgh.org.

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For additional information or images, please contact Kaitlyn Clem, Marketing and Communications Manager, at Media@TheFrickPittsburgh.org or 412-342-4025.

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