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REFERENCE NOTES

MONTGOMERY CITY-COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

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Colors of the City

Living in the city is like a never-ending adventure to the eyes, a palette of mixed, unmixed, and aged color. Some might even relate the colorful findings of the city to a rainbow. As a means of communication, nearly every color has a reason for being or a story of how it became. Think about the Statue of Liberty, when it was originally assembled, it was brownish color similar to that of aging copper, over the course time it became the color green we recognize it as today. According to the World Urban Forum, there are around 10,000 cities worldwide. Only imagination could fathom the colors that exist in all those cities. Comprised of an extensive multifunctional system of people, homes, businesses, organizations, and energy that never completely turns off, a city thrives at all times. To start deciphering this mass amount of color and how it all might've derived one may begin with very specific questions like, "What is color?", "Where does color come from?", or more specifically, "Why is a yellow cab yellow?" To answer those questions, we have to look into science a bit, starting with light, and how it converts into, you guessed it, COLORS.

In 1672, an English scientist named Isaac Newton, also curious about color, observed and began studying a beam of sunlight passing through a prism (A transparent triangular shaped block) as the light traveled through the prism, it was split into colored components, altogether forming a rainbow of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. Newton called this a spectrum. The prism divided the white light of the Sun into sections. Mixing paint to give your city light, life, and a certain tone could be slightly different; however, both processes start with primary colors. Primary colors are red, blue, and yellow, from which all colors are mixed. When you think about sections in a city, that breakdown is represented by districts, sectors, and characterized areas within a particular city limit.

According to science, around 8000 and 3500 B.C., the first farmers were known as the *Neolithic people,* began to develop their villages into small cities of a few thousand people. Over time advances in technology, physical environments, social organization, and population growth have allowed cities to flourish more frequently. Technological advances alone created more jobs, opening doors for many new city inhabitants to become non-farmers. This influenced the development of many other cities around the world. Since the appearance of the first cities, people had planned and built permanent

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settlements for various reasons. 10 to 13,000 years ago, the availability of food and resources in one area could be the inspiration to set up houses, thus spark the inspiration and construction of an entire city. In the 1700's the development of the steam engine provided the power source needed for large-scale manufacturing.

Post the first industrial revolution came a second, the age of Science and Mass Production. It was George Washington Carver's experimentation with plant production that led to American Industrialist, Henry Ford's successful assemblage of mass-produced automobiles in the dawn of a new age. Due to his competitive nature, for years, Ford only used black in his production, because it dried faster. Speed was indeed a virtue, just as the fast life was associated with cities the world over. He would later reconsider that decision for the same reason he made it, to begin with adding a splash of color to the times. Ford's Model T, originally introduced on October 1, 1908, would go from only black to more colors such as green, light blue, brown, and maroon. Those latter decisions were all done to meet the desires of his customers and the growing industry. The industrial boom would lead to the establishment of many cities around the world. Over the years, diversity in cities sprung to an all-time high, people were coming from all over to amass the perks of city life. Gary, Indiana, most famously known as the birthplace of Michael Jackson and his famous siblings, came into existence as a direct response to industrial expansion.

In the early 1900s, Gary was planned and built by the United States Steel Corporation. It was cities like this that provided different jobs and more income for families and individuals seeking a nontraditional livelihood. People were leaving their run-of-the-mill lifestyles in rural areas to move into urban communities. Achromatic lives had become old news, and the flavor of the city was the sought-after alternative. In this case, the color green in one place had become more intriguing than that in another. The almighty dollar and the city's progressive energy had won over 40% of the US population, a substantial increase from the 1800s to 6%. Today in the modern world, the digital age colors for countless reasons are all around us. With over 10'000 cities and counting, the color remains as a prime source in how we communicate and navigate the city. A great distance since the 19th century, in the span of 100 years, cities such as New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Houston, Miami, and Atlanta to name a few, have gone on to develop into astounding physical environments and world-renowned cities.

City Colors at Night editorial photography. Image of evening - 37998292.
https://www.dreamstime.com/stock-photography-city-colors-night-colorful-abstract-look-nd-st-rainy-new-york-image37998292

PATHFINDER

The catalog on the Montgomery City-County Public Library's website (www.mccpl.lib.al.us) will accommodate you in finding precise information on life in the city, understanding the origins and modernization of the BIG CITIES we know and love, and how those settlements are constructed and operated. Relative to the previous article "Colors of the City" you will be able to find material and research in depth on some of the world's most iconic cities and architecture. Upon your arrival at the libraries website you may browse our extensive catalog using the websites card catalog/search engine and utilize multiple databases, notably EBSCO Information Services to locate several helpful items and key information to get you started. A number of sources were used to gather information for Colors of the City, textual and visual.

Fiction & Non-Fictions Titles

100 Great Cities of World History, ©
1995. Call Number: J 307.76 BECKNER
Location: Morgan, Rufus Lewis, Governor's Square,
Ramer, & Pintlala Libraries

Inventions & Inventors Vol. 2
Buildings, Homes, & Structures, ©
2000. Call Number: JR 609 INVEN
Location: Morgan, Lowder, Rufus Lewis, Coliseum,
& Governor's Square Libraries

An Eye for Color, © 2009.
Call Number: EB ALBERS
Location: Morgan, Lowder, Lewis, Coliseum,
Governor's Square, Rosa Parks, Ramer, Pintlala,
Pike Road, & Hampstead Libraries

Montgomery and the River Region:
Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow, © 2007.
Call Number: RARE 976.1 NEELEY
Location: Morgan Library

The Optics Book: Fun Experiments with Light, Vision, & Color © 1998.
Call Number: J 535 LEVINE
Location: Morgan, Coliseum, & Ramer Libraries

Harlem, © 1998.
Call Number: Q 974.7 SMITH
Location: Morgan, Rufus Lewis, & Governor's Square Libraries

Noisy City Day/Noisy City Night, © 2004, 2015
Call Number: E ANDERSON
Location: Morgan Library

Montgomery: The Biography of a City © 1993
Call Number: RARE 976.1 GREENHA
Location: Morgan, & Coliseum Libraries

Note that using Ebsco Information Services, an online database found through the Montgomery City-County Public Library's website mccpl.lib.al.us, you will find a large variety of interesting documents relative to the featured topic. Searching colors of the city, city planning, and culture and color, to name a few, will offer a range of descriptive sources. When outside of the library you will need to use your library card or Alabama Virtual Library Card to access these databases, which all can be found under Research/ Learning, Database A-Z.

Magazines

- Archaeology
- The New York Times Magazine
- Government Technology

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