



JOURNAL OF TALES

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Founded by April Lynn Downey, LLC, M.A.

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www.YouTube.com/AprilLynnDowney

2024 Note from the Editor

Wishing you all a wonderful year, full of both adventure and peace!

Ever since I was little, I dreamed of having my own unique little shop. I always pictured it in an old brick building along a small-town main street with large windows in the front. It would be an *experience*, a place full of enchantment, that drives curiosity. This dream sometimes still feels so far away, but with Phoenix Feather Books & Curios online, I am taking one step closer to that dream.

One day Phoenix Feather will become that beautiful brick-and-mortar shop. This year I hope to make even bigger strides towards this goal! Your support, whether through following on social media or making an online purchase, helps that day-dreaming little girl in this endeavor - thank you!

Let the Journey Begin!





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~ Church Monuments Society: <https://churchmonumentsociety.org>

"The Church Monuments Society is for everyone who is fascinated by tomb carvings, from medieval effigies to modern gravestones. We organise excursions and study days, publish a journal and a newsletter, and advise on conservation and interpretation of monuments."

Table of Contents

The Journal.....	4
Mardi Gras / Carnival	4
Visiting a Sacred Space.....	9
Spring Holidays from Around the World.....	10
Happy Akitu!	11
The Archives.....	12
The Rhind Mathematical Papyrus – Egypt, 1650 BCE.....	12
Edward Lear’s Nonsense Botany – 1871-1877	13
<i>Collection of Various Clothing Styles</i> – 1562.....	14
Peking Opera Characters – c. 1900	15
The Museum	16
Jauk Manis Masks	16
Dwarf.....	17
Earth Monster Ceramic Vessel.....	18
Reliquary Guardian Figure	19
Sarcophagus.....	20
The Gallery.....	21
Baltimore, Maryland, USA.....	21
Activities.....	34
Baltimore Word Search.....	34
French Illustration Coloring Page.....	35

The Journal

Mardi Gras / Carnival

Varies - February & March, World

Mardi Gras first enchanted me as a little girl. My family went to Disney World and, on one of our days there, we took some time to explore the new hotels, checking out the décors and scenery. When we walked into Port Orleans French Quarter hotel, we fell in love with the captivating motifs and grand decorations. Colorful, bright faces hung over us in the dining hall as alligators playing instruments stood along the path that led down to an amazing swimming pool, complete with an enormous dragon whose tongue was a slide. The colors, the music, the elaborate ironwork, the whimsical characters - it was all so magical. So much so, that my parents switched hotels and we stayed at Port Orleans for the rest of our trip.

It is more than 30 years later and I am still in love with masks, French Quarter style, vintage entertainment, and Mardi Gras. But where did this mesmerizing tradition come from? Is there a deeper meaning aside from just merry making? And why does Venice have Carnival masks so similar to New Orleans' Mardi Gras masks?



Carnival masks on display in Venice, Italy. Photo by April Lynn Downey.

WHAT IS MARDI GRAS?

Mardi Gras (also called by other names, depending on the region) is the conclusion of the long Carnival season, which is traditionally from Twelfth Night (January 6th) until Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent in Catholicism. (However, note that this celebration is called by other names in different regions and sometimes has different dates.) "Carnival" comes from the Latin *carnelevamen* "farewell to flesh". The words "Mardi Gras" comes from the French words for "Fat Tuesday", and it is also called Shrove Tuesday or Shrove Tide in Catholicism. Shrove Tuesday is traditionally the day to go to church and confess all of one's sins and to prepare for the Lent season of prayer and restraint. *Shrove* comes from the English word *shrive*, which means to receive absolutions from sins, in other words, to receive a *shrift*. After confession, people would spend the rest of the day in merriment and feasting to strengthen their fortitude for the self-denial of Lent. It was called Fat Tuesday because also on this day people would empty their pantries and larders of sugar and other indulgent ingredients just before Lent. In German, Fat Tuesday is called Fast-Nacht ("fast eve"). The Pennsylvania Dutch have a popular confection called a Fastnacht donut, a fluffy donut sometimes covered with sugar and/or filled with cream.

CARNIVAL IN EUROPE

Carnival was adopted into Catholicism in the Middle Ages, but the tradition stems back to ancient European pagan festivals such as Bacchanalia, Lupercalia, Saturnalia, and possibly Spurcalia. Bacchanalia was a celebration of the Roman god of wine, Bacchus, but it originated in Greece as Dionysia, as the Greek name for the god of wine was Dionysus. However, it is believed that its origins may have stemmed from fertility rites. In Greece, Dionysia was a time of great feasting, processions, and theatre. When Bacchanalia first began in Italy, it was a secret party for women only, but eventually it included men. In 186 BCE, the Roman Senate outlawed most Bacchanalia celebrations because of their association with orgies, but the festival was kept alive in some areas anyway.

Lupercalia was celebrated on February 15 and involved a bizarre ritual which began with sacrificing a goat and a dog. The bloody knife was then smeared on two of the participants, who would then laugh as wool dipped in milk wiped the blood away. They would then make a strap out of the sacrificed animal's skins and run around whipping any woman they saw. It was believed that being struck by the whip would ensure fertility for the woman.

Saturnalia was a festival in Rome very similar to Kronia in Greece and was a time of great festivities. It was originally observed on December 17, but it was extended to three and then, even later, seven days. It was associated with the winter sowing season. The revelers would choose a "king" to reign during the celebration and slaves were given complete freedom. Craftsmen, called Sigillarrii, would make candles and wax fruit and statuettes which were given as gifts.

It is quite often stated that Spurcalia was a Germanic pagan solar festival that took place in winter that was eventually overtaken by Carnival. However, that theory is not without contention.



Fastnachtsumzug (Shrovetide Parade) in Germany. Photo by Marc Lautenbacher.

AMERICAN MARDI GRAS

American Mardi Gras originated in 1702 in Mobile, Alabama. In 1711, the Boeuf Gras Society was founded in Mobile and lasted until 1817. The Boeuf Gras is the “fatted bull” which represents the last meat to be eaten before Lent. This was an important part of the celebration in France since at least 1512, but it is thought it may be derived from Druidic times.

By the 1730s it had spread to New Orleans, Louisiana. In the early days though, Mardi Gras celebrations were mostly un-organized. That is until 1857, when a mysterious secret society sprang up in New Orleans, which magnified the celebration in scope and grandeur - the Mystick Krewe of Comus. (Comus being the Greek god of festivities.) At around 9pm on Mardi Gras evening, the merry band of revelers dressed up as characters from mythology and demons and paraded through the street. They displayed fascinating tableaux (stationary figures representing a historical scene). After the grand public display, certain people were fortuitously invited to a ball at the Gaiety Theatre. The event was a huge success and what followed was a yearly extravagance of mirth and merry. The years of 1862 through 1865 saw a break in the festival as New Orleans was in grip of the Civil War. However, in 1866 the Mystick Krewe once again took to the streets and reinstated their yearly display, one that would capture the interest of the entire nation. By 1870, visitors would come from all over to see the show. Other Mardi Gras organizations sprang up, such as the Krewe of Momus and Krewe of Proteus. Aside from select times of absence (due to

war, epidemics, etc.), the Mystick Krewe of Comus ran their parade every year up until 1991; however, they still host a Mardi Gras ball.

In 1872, a new tradition was added by the city of New Orleans - the arrival of the King of Carnival! An organization named the Rex Organization was founded (with "rex" being the Latin word for "king"). Where the Mystick Krewe of Comus ruled the night, Rex ruled the day. The sporadic day time processions were starting to be replaced with a bit more organized procession, featuring the King of Carnival, around whom a mythology was composed. It was said that he was the son of Old King Cole and the Greek muse Terpsichore and he was hundreds of years old. The first person chosen to be the Rex of Carnival was Lewis J. Solomon. Along with this new event, symbols and traditions were established that we forever since associate with Mardi Gras. The colors purple, gold, and green were picked as the official colors. An anthem was chosen - "If Ever I Cease to Love", from the musical comedy "Blue Beard". In 1872, this song was very popular among the bands because of a rumor that was circulating about Russian Grand Duke Alexis Romanoff. It was said that while visiting St. Louis he fell in love with a performer named Lydia Thompson while she was singing this song. The Grand Duke made his arrival in New Orleans in time for Mardi Gras and all the bands played this song, alluding to the rumor. Ever since then, the song has been linked with New Orleans and Mardi Gras.

The first Rex parade was fairly modest. The King rode a horse and many of the maskers in the procession were those people already on the streets. The following year in 1873, the parade became more organized and grand. A Carnival Queen was chosen to rule alongside the King as well. The King would send "edicts" across the country, inviting visitors to New Orleans for his festival. Eventually the Rex Organization was incorporated as the School of Design. Like the Mystick Krewe, they too would add a ball to their program. Every year Rex produces a pageant with a different theme, but they do have a couple of floats that return every year; one of these is the Boeuf Gras. Originally, the Boeuf Gras was a live bull in the parade, but this tradition stopped in 1901. In 1959, the Boeuf Gras returned only in the form of a paper-mache float.

The Rex Organization's motto is "Pro Bono Publico" - "for the public good" - and they had a chance to really prove they mean it during Hurricane Katrina, when Rex started up three programs to help the city and its residents during the crisis.

Today, 149 years later, Rex and their fantastic displays are an integral part of Mardi Gras in New Orleans.



Mardi Gras parade float in New Orleans, Louisiana. Photo by Sergey Galyonkin.

MODERN MARDI GRAS

Today, many people join in Mardi Gras festivities, whether Catholic or not and with the observance of Lent being unnecessary for participation. The pagan ritual sacrifices are all but memory. It is an amazing thing for such a festival to have survived over 2,000 years, yet it does represent a primal truth we all must face - the long cold winter of deficiency (whether imposed by Fortune or oneself) will come to everyone at some point, but until then, why not have a little fun?

Written by April Lynn Downey

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Tricentennial Music Moment: If Ever I Cease to Love: <https://youtu.be/hueRGugdR0s>

Visiting a Sacred Space

A SNIPPET FROM THE ARTICLE:

"But here and elsewhere throughout humanity, the labyrinth was not a temple for a god, but represented another aspect of human spirituality. It is not just a place but also a period of time, a journey. The labyrinth carves out a space where one embarks on a journey of self-knowledge, meditation, and life and death. One comes to the end changed, no longer the same person who entered."

The full article by April Lynn Downey can be found on Trip Scholars at this [LINK](#)



The Tahkuna stone labyrinth on the island of Hiiumaa, Estonia. Photo by HendrixEesti via Wikicommons, public domain.

Spring Holidays from Around the World

- March 8: Maha Shivaratree - Hindu
- March 11: The start of Ramadan - Muslim
- March 17: St. Patrick's Day - Irish / global
- March 19: Nowruz / Persian New Year - Persian
- March 20: The Vernal / Spring Equinox - the world
- March 24: Purim - Jewish
- March 24-31: Semana Santa / Holy Week - Christian, Spain
- March 25: Holi - Hindu
- March 31: Easter - Christian
- April 4: Qing Ming Jie / Tomb Sweeping Day - Chinese
- April 10: Eid al Fitr / End of Ramadan - Muslim
- April 25: Anzac Day - Australia & New Zealand
- May 9: Whit Sunday / Pentecost - Christian
- May 26: Kyiv Day - Ukraine
- June 2: Festa della Repubblica: Italy
- June 10: Duan Wu Jie / Dragon Boat Festival - Chinese
- June 20: Summer Solstice - global

Happy Akitu!

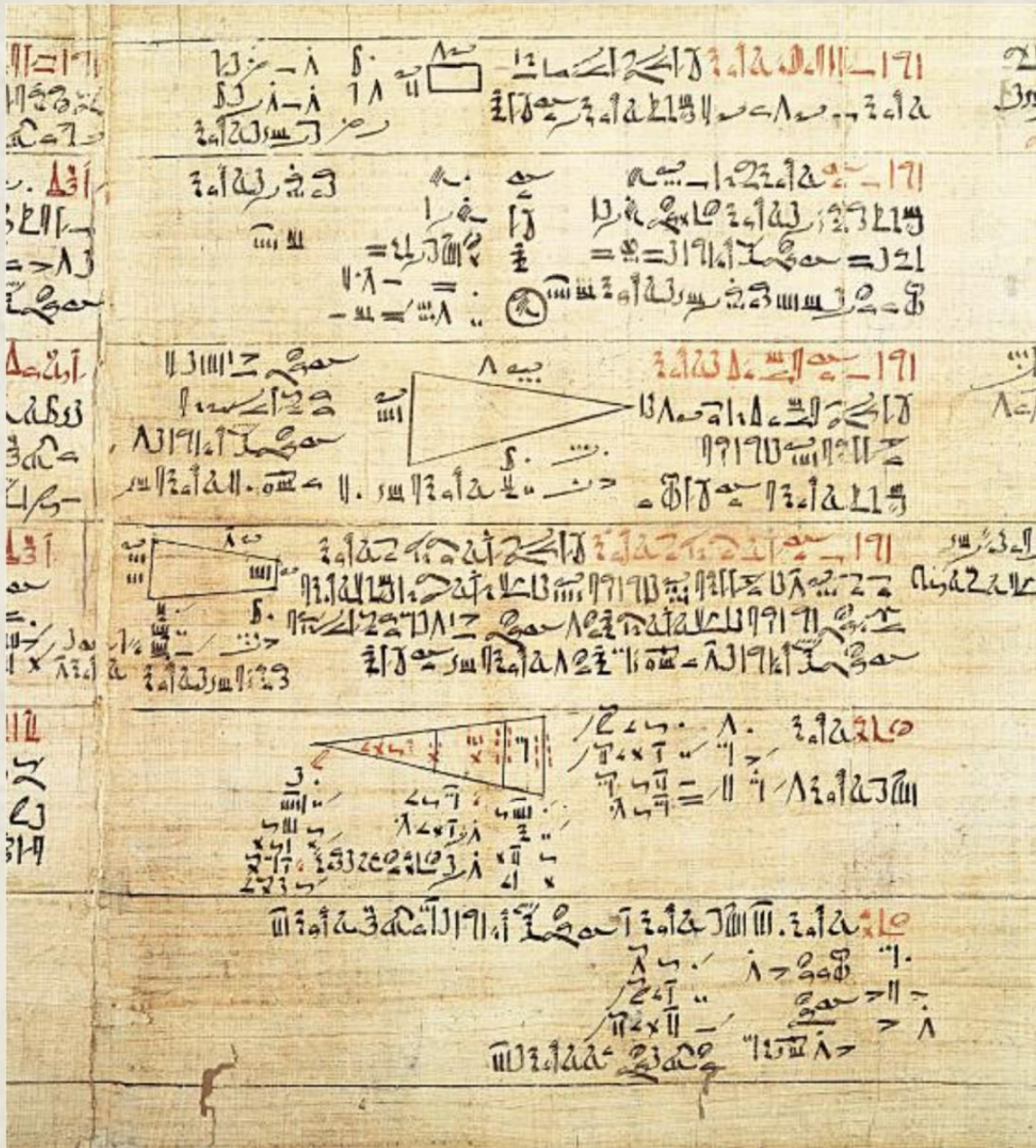
Akitu was an important ancient Babylonian spring festival. The festival celebrated the renewal of nature, the spring harvest, the re-establishment of the kingship by divine authority, and the new year. During the 12-day celebration, one of the most important traditions was the procession of the statue of the god Nabu from his cult center in Borsippa to the Temple of Marduk in Babylon. Below is a picture of the Gate of Ishtar and a lion panel that was installed along the Procession Way.

The following is from the Metropolitan Museum of Art: "The most important street in Babylon was the Processional Way, leading from the inner city through the Ishtar Gate to the Bit Akitu, or "House of the New Year's Festival." The Ishtar Gate, built by Nebuchadnezzar II, was a glazed-brick structure decorated with figures of bulls and dragons, symbols of the weather god Adad and of Marduk. North of the gate the roadway was lined with glazed figures of striding lions. This relief of a lion, the animal associated with Ishtar, goddess of love and war, served to protect the street; its repeated design served as a guide for the ritual processions from the city to the temple."



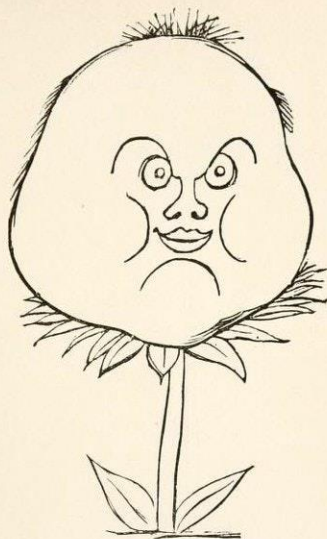
The Archives

The Rhind Mathematical Papyrus – Egypt, 1650 BCE



Also called the Ahmes Papyrus. The scroll included 84 mathematical problems, including division, fractions, and volumes. Found at the Mathematical Association of America.

Edward Lear's Nonsense Botany – 1871-1877



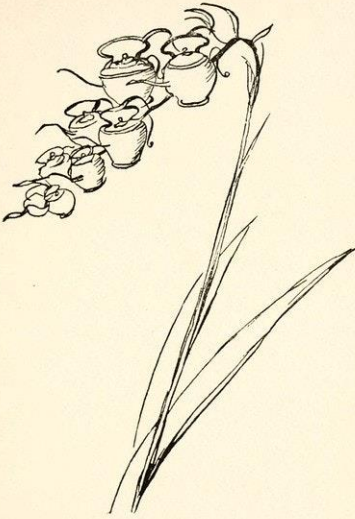
Phattfacia Stupenda.



Tigerillia Terribilis.



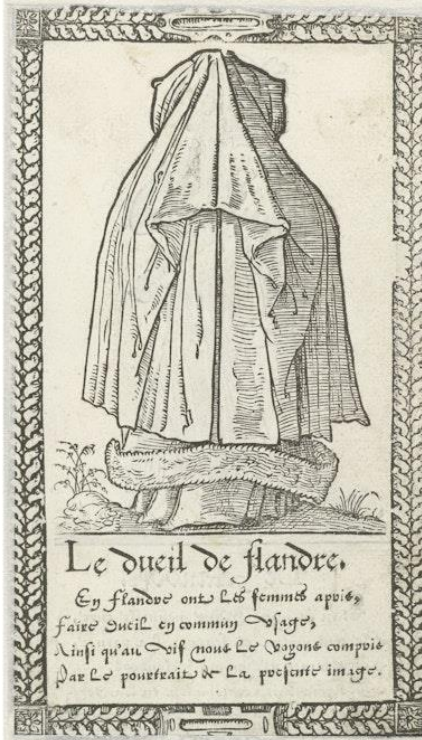
Barkia Howlaloudia.



Jinglia Tinkettlia.

Collection of Various Clothing Styles – 1562

By Francois Desprez - the world's first costume book



Peking Opera Characters – c. 1900



The Museum

Jauk Manis Masks

Bali / Indonesia: c. 1935 CE

Found at the Leiden University Libraries Digital Collections



These types of masks are used in traditional ritual dances in Bali and Indonesia.

Dwarf

Egypt: c. 1850-1700 BCE, Late Middle Kingdom

Found at the Metropolitan Museum of Art



Made of faded blue faience, this figurine is 2-1/16" tall.

Earth Monster Ceramic Vessel

Jama-Coaque, Ecuador: 500-1000 CE

Found at The Johns Hopkins Archaeological Museum



This ceramic figure is approximately 7" tall

Reliquary Guardian Figure

Gabon, Africa: date unknown

Found at The Penn Museum



This figure is made out of copper, brass, and wood and is 12.3" tall.

Sarcophagus

Etruscan, Italy: 399-200 BCE

Found at The Penn Museum



This Etruscan sarcophagus is made out of nenfro, a type of volcanic rock, and is nearly 81" long.

The Gallery

Baltimore, Maryland, USA

Baltimore was founded in 1729 and ever since has been an important city along the Chesapeake Bay and has played a significant role in US industry, import/exports/ and military. Photography by April Lynn Downey.



Baltimore's Inner Harbor



Baltimore's Inner Harbor



Carousel by the Maryland Science Center



Baltimore's Inner Harbor



Edgar Allan Poe Memorial



Seven Foot Knoll Lighthouse, built in 1856, one of the oldest Chesapeake lighthouses in existence.



The Eastern Avenue Pumping Station, built in 1915, a working part of Baltimore's sanitation system.



The USS Constellation, still in Baltimore's Inner Harbor, was launched in 1797.



The Hotel Monaco, a Beaux-Arts building erected in 1906 CE.



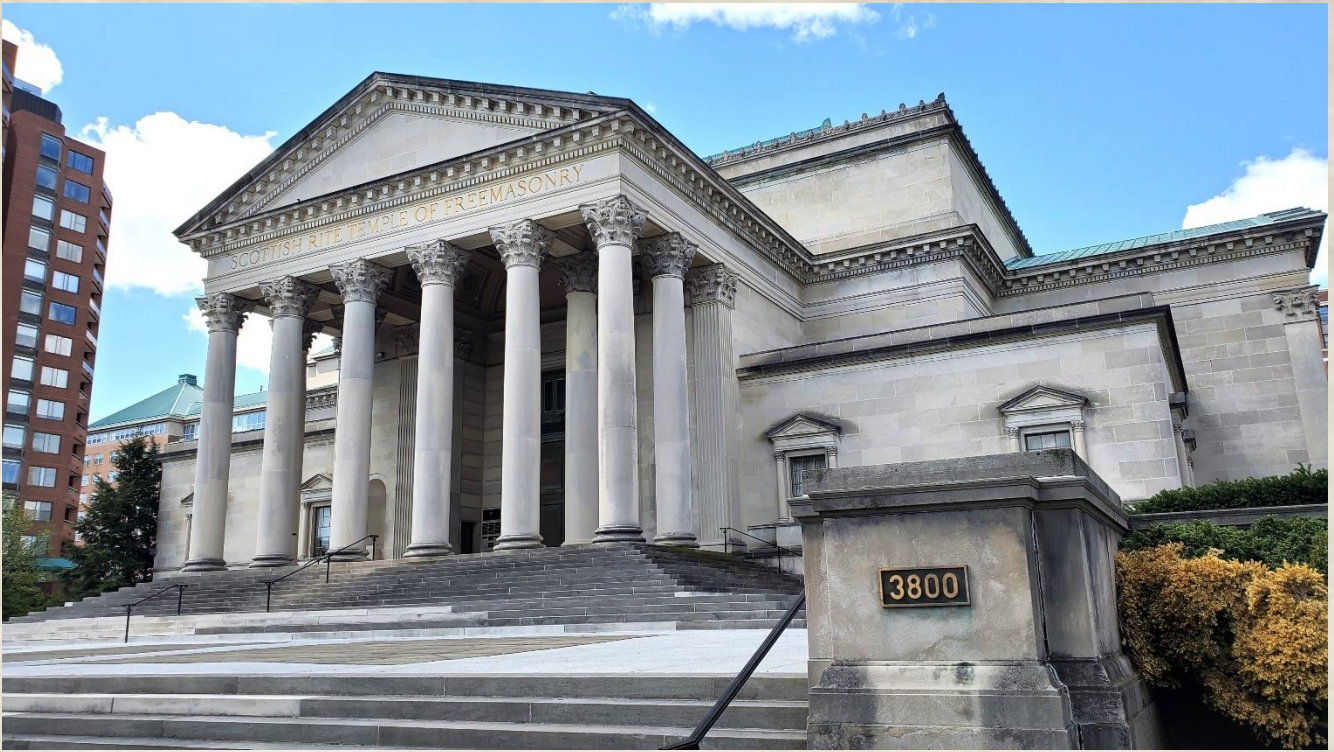
The Hotel Monaco



Baltimore's Inner Harbor



Old architecture near Lafayette Square Park



The Scottish Rite Temple of Freemasonry



Snapshot from the Baltimore Farmer's Market



Streetscape in Fell's Point



Sailboat in Baltimore's Inner Harbor



Rawlings Conservatory, the Palm House built in 1888.



Saint John AME Church in Lafayette Square, built in 1879, designed by architects Dixon & Carson.



Historic architecture in Baltimore, the Stafford Hotel opened in 1984 as the tallest building in the Mt. Vernon district.



Baltimore's Inner Harbor

Activities

Baltimore Word Search

W O C P D E D H M K L G H Q Y O I K V N S F L B Z M R P H Z
S S M A R Y L A N D Y A H E R I T A G E W Z X S D Q U F I M
N J X B R W V T V M C N K D C H E S A P E A K E M B X H G Z
U E P Q K V K Y Y J R Z Q F M O D U D V V N H A R B O R O X
O D K O Z H P Z A S A I D O H R V K F F U G V F J Q R T Q Q
T L J A E X H V Z K B B G D U K D V L X W F K T N E X J M M
Q P J O Y Y L J L X S V O X I L I C C C D C Y R D D U X T U
K N X Y T T Y M O Z A X I I Y S L U U S A V S D Z A M L D P
B J D T N R I F Q Q R X Y Y S P N Q S D R L Q S P E P H X I
W R D A W H B Q S Q J Y Q X C F J Q Q W M L V F R D R X N S
E I A F N S P W O N N E F E L L S P O I N T K E U G W P R R
K P U C T S X A Y B Q C I D F R M X M J N E P K R O A N B M
H C B D R U J K T I G P Q K Y B Y O B P I I U S M T T D K I
J I K N G K K A X A M N S Y K N P C G D N V O E D O E C B J
P R L H G U I V Z P P D Y N A T T Y B O H V B L S G R T U N
M K E Y Q Z A N G A K S B A Y W N S N R P J A T Q C S P G D
K M E K A E C O F P Z A C I C S M H F Y V T L Z K A H I N H
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F Q K M L A S N Q Q U X A H S N V J G O G W I R E W D B H L
Y O C H T K Q E C W W N G K U A R S X S A C M Q G J N O K O
V A E N Q Z S B Q U P K N I H L J S A F I X O M Q Y H I M M
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T W G J K G E Q A U V S F U S Y F D E U J X I N X C X J F V
J C S N U G I Z D T B Z G S J Z E Q N V U N M X J H X C E Y

CHESAPEAKE

FELLS POINT

BALTIMORE

KEY

WATERSHED

MARYLAND

HERITAGE

POE

NATTY BOH

CALVERT

ORIOLES

BAY

PATAPSCO

SELTZER

BRIDGE

HARBOR

RAVENS

CRABS

French Illustration Coloring Page

Designed by Émile Prisse d'Avennes (1807-1897)

