
DANE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER



Volume XXV

Spring 2006

Number 1

Madison Sesquicentennial (1856-2006)

In March of 1856 the Wisconsin Legislature passed a bill making Madison a city. The City of Madison incorporated as a City by enacting a special charter on March 7, 1856. On April 7, 1856 the charter went into effect when the first Mayor and twelve aldermen met to organize the new government.

That means that the City of Madison will be 150 years old and is getting ready to celebrate with a spring birthday bash.

Mayor Dave Cieslewicz hopes thousands of people will join city officials at the big birthday party on the weekend of April 7, when the original city charter took effect and the first mayor and City Council met to organize a government 150 years ago.

The party will include a formal commemoration event April 7, tours and other activities April 8 and a free birthday bash April 9 at Monona Terrace. The party will feature live music, films, drum groups and arts and crafts. A calendar for all the events for the Sesquicentennial weekend can be found on the web at: www.madison150.org

"It's important because it's an opportunity for the whole city to look back at its history, to take stock of its assets as well as its challenges, and to plan for the future," Cieslewicz said.

Mayor Dave Cieslewicz hopes to see a year-long celebration of life in Madison- past, present, and future- that brings together the arts communities, schools, businesses, neighborhoods and local government.

Join fellow Madisonians in celebrating our 150th Birthday on April 9, 2006 from 1 p.m. - 6 p.m. at the Monona Terrace and Convention Center, 1 John Nolen Drive. There will be birthday cake, performances, and activities for everyone.



First house in Madison, built by the Pecks in 1837, to accommodate the builders of the Territorial Capitol. From a painting based on memory of old residents.

Did You Know?

The Madison four lakes region was formed by the glaciers when they retreated about 13,000 years ago. Between 300 and 1,300 AD Native American "mound builders" occupied the area. Of the thousands of effigy mounds that once surrounded the lakes only a few

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Madison Sesquicentennial (*Continued from page 1*)

remain to remind us of this unique culture. By the time the Yankee settlers began to arrive, the Winnebago Nation called the area home and continued to camp near the lakes into the 1940's.

James Duane Doty, a territorial Judge and land speculator, traveled through Madison's Isthmus in May 1829 and liked the site so much that he bought 1,200 acres for \$1,500 and platted a grid of streets. In 1836, he persuaded the territorial legislature meeting in Belmont, WI to designate Madison, then his paper city, as the site for the new capital.

Doty named the city Madison for James Madison, the 4th President of the U.S. who had died on June 28, 1836 and he named the streets around the capitol square for the other signers of the U.S. Constitution.

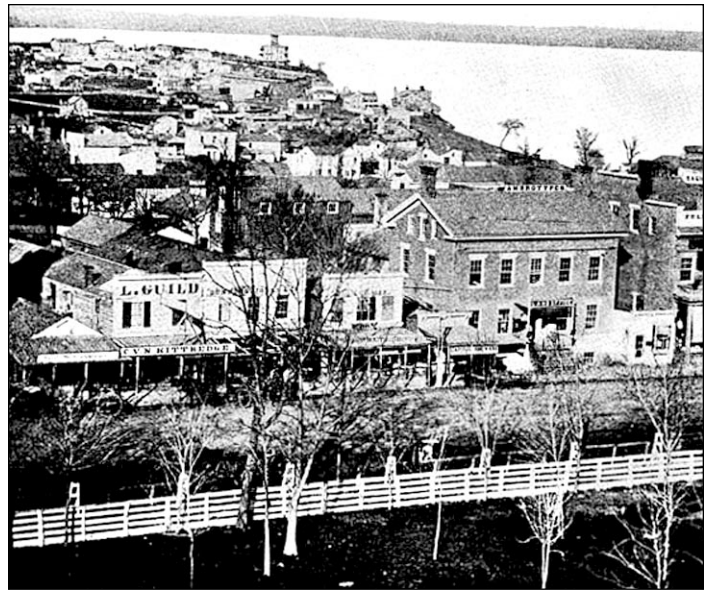


Mrs. Roseline Peck, first settler of Madison. Taken in 1874, in her 66th year.

In April 1837, Eben and Roseline Peck moved to the Isthmus from Blue Mounds and built a log cabin boarding house near S. Butler St. to accommodate the workers who came from Milwaukee to build the Capitol. Roseline gave birth to Madison's first non-Native American baby and her public-house guests named the child Wisconsiniana Victoria.

Nine years later when the Village of Madison was incorporated the population had reached 626. Wisconsin became a state in 1848. Madison became a city in 1856 and boasted a population of 6,864. The first settlers were Yankees from the eastern states. They were soon followed by German, Irish and Norwegian immigrants. Italians, Greeks, Jews and Blacks also found a home here after the turn of the Century.

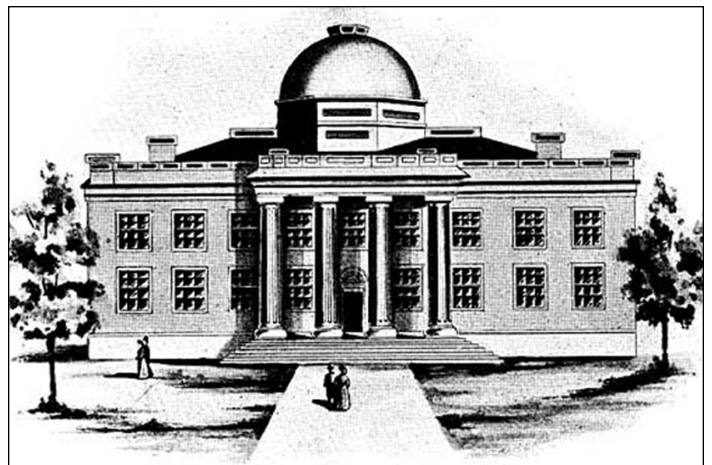
King St. and the E. Main/S. Pinckney Street sides of the Capitol Square were the first commercial districts. The first residential districts were north of the Square along Gorham, Gilman and Langdon Streets. The



As Madison looked on Pinckney Street, and Third and Sixth Wards when it became a city in 1856. From daguerreotype taken from rotunda of Capitol.

growth of state and county government, the University of Wisconsin and a few industries such as Oscar Mayer, French Battery Co. (Ray-o-Vac), L.L. Olds Seed Co., the Gisholt Machine Tool Co., and the Fauerbach Brewery provided employment and stimulated Madison's growth.

When Madison became a city in 1856, the population being divided as equally as practicable into four wards. Col. Jairus C. Fairchild was the first mayor, William N. Seymour the first clerk, and the first city school board was composed of Wm. B. Jarvis (president), D. H. Wright, L. J. Farwell, L. W. Hoyt, Simeon Mills, and Darwin Clark.



The old Capitol Building as it looked in 1856.

Records Center Highlights “Focus on Volunteers”

By Debbie Kmetz, Electronic Cataloging Project Coordinator

During the past two years, this column has featured some of the fascinating items found on the Dane County Historical Records Center's shelves. Highlighted pieces have included the “1904-08 Directory of Dane County,” the special World War II V-Mail edition of the “Wisconsin State Journal,” and Madison Central High School's student newspaper, the “Madison Mirror.” Materials such as these hold treasure troves of valuable research information from the specifics that bring genealogists joy to the background information that provides insight into earlier times.

Yet, all of these wonderful sources would remain hidden from view if it were not for the efforts of many people over the past 40 years – those who created a solid foundation by initially collecting, organizing and cataloging materials and those who continue that work today. Dane County Historical Records Center is lucky to have a dedicated cadre of volunteers who have been working to bring knowledge about the collection to the public in this electronic age.

Cataloging

Catalogers are the classic “behind the scenes” workers. Where reference librarians and archivists interact regularly with the public, catalogers have a different relationship. They think about how researchers think. Researchers may include students, local historians, scholars, genealogists, preservationists, and people simply curious and interested in the world around them. A cataloger considers the types of information that a publication holds for potential researchers in order to determine what words will best draw them to the information.

Library catalogers first examine a publication and then create a unique catalog record for it by entering identifying information including title, author, and publisher. They also enter information that guides researchers to the content. This may be in the form of subject terms. It may also be in the form of short summaries that provide the “keywords” for the type of searching that researchers have grown to use more and more.

The Dane County Historical Society has been very fortunate with the thoughtfulness, thoroughness and attention to detail that the volunteer catalogers bring. Ann Waidelich is a retired City of Madison librarian who has been coming in regularly for over two years, cataloging books and pamphlets. Ann has cataloged a large variety of materials from 19th century emigrant guides to 1970s community development material, bringing a broad perspective and a detailed knowledge about local government. During her career, Ann organized the Municipal Reference Service, an impressive



Gini Nichols (seated) and Ann Waidelich volunteer on Thursdays at the Records Center.

collection of publications and clippings related to Dane County and its municipalities. As a member of Historic Blooming Grove Historical Society and Historic Madison, Inc., Ann also brings a wide-ranging knowledge of the area to her understanding of particular publications.

A tireless researcher with a curious mind, Ann often does self-assigned “homework,” locating obituaries or following other research leads to find out more about particular authors or organizations associated with the publications that she is cataloging. That added information helps provide detail and perspective, increasing the research value of the original material. The Records Center benefits from her extensive knowledge and enthusiasm for locally-based materials.

Like many repositories, the Records Center holds a variety of kinds of research material including periodicals and serials -- items that are published on a regular schedule. These publications present some particular cataloging issues and the Records Center is fortunate to draw upon the expertise of a volunteer for whom cataloging newsletters, magazines and newspapers is a specialty.

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Records Center Highlights (*Continued from page 3*)



Mary Clark catalogs periodicals at the Records Center.

Mary Clark is a professional librarian who arrives at the Records Center at the end of her workday every Monday. During the day, Mary is the person at the Department of Public Instruction's Reference and Loan Library who coordinates WISCAT, the online statewide catalog. Mary was introduced to the Records Center's collections last year when Dane County Historical Society sent test records to WISCAT. Intrigued by the collection and the challenge of making it accessible online, Mary offered to help with the cataloging.

At the Dane County Historical Records Center, Mary looks through all of the copies of a periodical -- newsletter, magazine or newspaper -- in order to create a catalog record. In that record, Mary describes the publication and also notes the exact copies that the Records Center holds. As a lifelong Madisonian, Mary brings a strong local interest as well as expertise to her work. While reviewing periodicals, Mary is quick to observe those special gems of information such as the biographies that are regularly featured in the Belleville Area Historical Society's newsletter "Millstone Memories."

Like Ann, Mary brings a broad range of experience to her volunteer work at the Records Center, providing valuable advice on the overall cataloging project and addressing Dane County Historical Society's own records.

The Archives, with its unpublished material, is the other major component of the Records Center. For the Spring Semester 2006, the DCHS is pleased to have Stacey Erdman as an archives cataloger. Stacey is a library school graduate student who is doing an independent study in archives cataloging at the Records Center. She is working closely with her advisor Karen Baumann, retired senior archivist at the Wisconsin Historical Society.

An archives collection can range from a single piece of correspondence to boxes upon boxes of records or personal papers. These also present unique cataloging issues. Through her work at the Records Center this semester, Stacey will gain experience cataloging such items as reminiscences, scrapbooks, church records, Civil war diaries, general store account books, and more.

Though the youngest among the group currently volunteering at the Records Center, Stacey also brings experience to her work. Stacey has worked on numerous digitization projects, built databases and is currently a project assistant for "American Languages: The Nation's Many Voices Online," working with sound recordings from the University of Wisconsin's "Dictionary of American Regional English" collection. Stacey brings a special interest in ephemera -- items such as restaurant menus, programs, and ticket stubs that are not necessarily produced for longevity. These supposedly short-lived materials, when saved, can offer small but potent glimpses into everyday life in the past.

Stacey's mentor, Karen Baumann, is perhaps the volunteer most responsible for guiding the Records Center in this electronic age. A nationally recognized archives cataloger, Karen was deeply involved in the creation of ArCat, the online archives catalog at the Wisconsin Historical Society. When the Dane County Historical Society was contemplating the move to electronic cataloging, board members consulted Karen. She advised that as they developed the project they consider the broader issue of access: what would be the best way for people unfamiliar with the Records Center to gain knowledge of its holdings? Karen believed that posting the records on WISCAT would make the collection accessible to researchers in a new and potentially very exciting way.

Karen has been a steady, thoughtful and gracious advisor to the Records Center throughout the electronic cataloging project, reviewing plans and providing expertise for interaction with the software company. She has helped survey the archives collections to choose material for Stacey's cataloging internship and has helped provide guidance in the indexing project. Most recently, Karen has also begun cataloging some of the larger archives collections herself.

For research material to be truly useful, it is critical that the material have a "call" number that identifies where it might be located. Lorraine Hawkinson is a professional librarian who catalogued a rich career's worth of publications at UW Memorial Library. Retired from the Memorial Library, Lorraine continues to work at the Vesterheim Genealogical Center in Madison which specializes in Norwegian family history. Lorraine also guided a project at the Records Center, creating Library of Congress call numbers for the books. The project involved identifying the call numbers and adhering labels with those numbers to the books' spines. Neatly done, the books are now arranged topically and by number and can be found easily.

Indexing and Inventories

Researchers know the value of a good index, those pages at the back of a publication that provide specific page numbers identifying where they can find names, places and subject terms. Though people use indexes regularly, there may

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Records Center Highlights (*Continued from page 4*)



Karen Baumann is about to hand Stacey Erdman an archives box.

be only a few readers who have thought about what might be involved in creating such a thorough list of names, places and subject terms. It's a complex job well suited to the patient and persistent, orderly and careful.

Gini Nichols brings those attributes to her work at the Records Center. A retired teacher who taught for 23 years at St. John's Catholic School in Waunakee, Gini has also been doing genealogy for over 30 years, the last seven as a professional genealogist. She is a member of the McFarland Historical Society and is also volunteering her time in a project to computerize McFarland Cemetery records.

As her first project at the Records Center, Gini has indexed the "Souvenir of Diamond Jubilee of St. Francis Xavier Congregation, Cross Plains, Wisconsin, 1853-1928." This 72-page soft cover publication contains a historical sketch of early Cross Plains, as well as information about the church, parish organizations and St. Francis parochial school. The pamphlet contains numerous lists including names of clergy, sisters who staffed the school, grade school students, and families living within the parish in 1928. There are also several pages devoted to Cross Plains businesses followed by more pages of advertising. Gini has indexed personal names, place names and business names as they appear in text, photograph captions and even in ads.

Gini has also completed an index for George Esser's "Memoirs of My Life: An Autobiography" by the German immigrant who began a brewing business in Cross Plains. Gini's next undertaking is the "Centennial History, Township of Springdale."

These indexes will be inserted into the electronic catalog records so that people searching the Records Center electronic catalog will be able to find the names in the indexes

through keyword searching. Dane County Historical Society is also publishing the indexes in pamphlet form and making them available electronically.

Another way of providing more specific information, both in the library and the archives, is to create an inventory which expands upon the information available in the briefer catalog entry. Inventories provide researchers with a sense of the scope and depth of the material in which they may be interested. Readers may recall a previous article about the "Madison Mirror," the newspaper produced by the students at Madison Central High School from 1924 until the school's closing in 1969. A group of diligent volunteers including Joanne Jensen, Mike Bovre and Janice Barr went through the bound volumes of newspapers, compiling a list of every issue, its date and number of pages. They also noted when an issue might hold special interest such as news about Central High graduates who had enlisted in the service during World War II. Mary Clark produced a 22-page electronic version from the handwritten inventory.



Joanne Jensen

Additional Projects

Creating catalog records, call numbers, indexes and inventories are ongoing tasks critical for getting the word out about the collections and helping people locate information within them. Volunteers have also been involved in several other important Records Center projects.

Last June, Dane County Historical Society board members and supporters took advantage of the warm weather and a power washer to clean additional metal shelving for the Records Center, resulting in a new double row of upright shelves. Employing the power washer, Lysol, and many, many rags, Joanne Jensen, Mike Bovre, Beverly Kneebone, Ann Waidelich, George Jacobs and Jerry Remy carried, washed, rinsed, and dried the frames and shelves that had originally held canned goods at a nearby grocery store. It was indeed an example of many hands making for lighter work.

Readers may notice Joanne Jensen's name in regards to two of the projects above. Recently retired as owner of Josie's Restaurant, the well-known Italian restaurant on Regent Street in Madison, Joanne has brought her keen sense of organization, focus, curiosity and cheerfulness to many tasks. In addition to the above projects, Joanne

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DANE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER: The Dane County Historical Society Newsletter is published quarterly (Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter), with submissions due 15 days earlier. Reader reviews, testimonials, flak and flattery, are also welcome. Send to: Howard Sherpe, Editor, DCHS Newsletter, 1017 Chieftain Lookout, Madison, WI 53711. E-mail: skjerpe@chorus.net

Dennis Bitterlich, President, DANE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Dane County Historical Society is 45!!

By Mary Clark, DCHS Board Member

Forty-five years ago, a group of dedicated county residents got together and decided that Dane County needed a historical society. There had been interest in forming a county historical society for many years prior. Finally in 1960, J.W. (Bill) Clark, a Dane County Agriculture Agent, encouraged an already interested Madison City Farmers Club to initiate the formation of the society. The charter meeting of the Dane County Historical Society was held on February 13, 1961 at the Dane County Fairgrounds. It is reported that over one hundred people attended that first meeting. Shortly afterwards, Delma Woodburn became the Society's first president, and remained in that capacity for sixteen years, until 1977.

That first year of the Society's existence was characterized by organizing activities; however the folks managed to squeeze in at least two organized tours. One tour took in many historical sites in eastern Dane County, and the other tour was to the State Historical Society's Stonefield Farm in Cassville. The organizers were a busy group.

Other activities during the initial year included: the preparation and distribution of the "Historical and Scenic Sites Map" of Dane County; the Society's official affiliation with the Wisconsin Council for Local History; the selection of the very first historical site to get a DCHS marker (St Mary of the Oaks chapel); and the design and adoption of the Society's logo, which is still in use today. Membership dues back in 1961 were \$2.00.

Last month, the Society's board of directors met on February 13, 2006 -- the anniversary of that very first meeting, and recalled the founding of the society.

In the forty-five years between those two meetings, the Dane County Historical Society has accomplished a great deal. The Society has continued to manage its robust historical marker program since those first markers were placed in the early 1960s. Thirty-nine markers have now been erected by the Society all over the county. The Society's latest marker commemorates Nathan Dane and is located at the new Dane County Courthouse. Before that marker is even officially dedicated, however, plans are already underway for the next historical marker to commemorate the establishment of rural route delivery near Sun Prairie.



Four past presidents of Dane County Historical Society. (L-R) Standing: Jerry Remy and Mike Bovre; Seated: George Reinke and Claire Mulvey.

The Dane County Historical Archives and Records Center was established in 1968 as a joint effort with the Madison Public Library and the Dane County Library System. Originally housed at the Madison Public Library, the Records Center later relocated to its current home at the Lussier Family History Center.

In recent years, the Society has remained very active. In 2000, the Society published a full-length book, *FORWARD! A History of Dane: the Capital County*. This undertaking was something to be proud of, as the volume was the first published history of Dane County in nearly 100 years.

Once the Records Center settled into its new digs at the Lussier Family History Center, the electronic cataloging project, under the guidance of consultant Debbie Kmetz, began to take shape. Debbie, with the help of her volunteers, has been very busy organizing and cataloging the archives collection (and finding lots of collection gems in the process!). In keeping with its original mission to "preserve, advance and disseminate knowledge of the history of Dane County", the Society is beginning to turn its attention even more towards preservation, organization, digitization of and access to its collections.

Stay tuned to see what's in store for Dane County Historical Society's next forty-five years!!

DCHS Annual Meeting

May 7, 2006
SAVE THE DATE!!

The annual membership meeting of the Dane County Historical Society will be held this year on Sunday afternoon, May 7, 2006 at a site to be announced. Planning is still under way for the meeting, but the program will focus on Madison, to coincide with the Madison Sesquicentennial. Ann Waidelich and Joanne Jensen will present a very interesting program all about Madison's downtown restaurants and taverns.

The annual meeting will be held in conjunction with the dedication of the 2005 historical marker commemorating Nathan Dane, at the brand new Dane County Court House.

We are hoping to have a great turnout for this year's annual meeting. That means we need YOU to attend! Mark you calendars now for May 7.

You will be receiving more detailed information about the time and place in a follow-up mailing this month. See you there!

DANE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Please renew your membership if you have not already done so. Your continued interest and support enables the Society to carry out its goal preserving Dane County's heritage for tomorrow's generation.

(Our fiscal year is May 1-April 30. Circle your choice.)

- Individual - \$17.00
- Family - \$23.00
- Contributing - \$45.00
- Sustaining - \$65
- Business/Professional - \$80
- Student - \$10.00
- Local Historical Society - \$30.00

Make your check payable to: Dane County Historical Society.

Mail to:

Dane County Historical Society
P.O. Box 5003 • Madison WI 53705

The Dane County Historical Society has an office and archive room in the lower level of the Lussier Family Heritage Center, Lake Farm County Park at 3101 Lake Farm Road.

Phone: 224-3605

e-mail: danecountyhistory@sbcglobal.net

DANE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS *FORWARD! A HISTORY OF DANE: THE CAPITAL COUNTY*

FORWARD traces the history of Dane County through the twentieth century. As home to state government, Dane County history provides background and insight into the development of Wisconsin throughout this period. The book was researched and written by Allan Ruff and Tracy Will. Tracy Will is well known to many Wisconsinites as one of the hosts of the popular television series, *Wisconsin Stories*, developed cooperatively by Wisconsin Public Television and the Wisconsin Historical Society. The first published history of Dane County in nearly 100 years is replete with fascinating details and rich graphics. It has over 400 pages of text, hundreds of pictures, complete index, maps, photos, and graphics enliven the text.

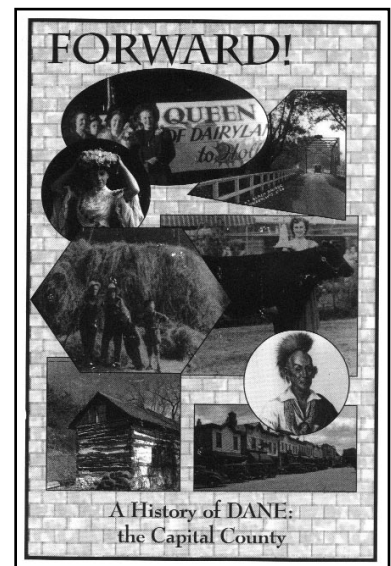
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Records Center Highlights (*Continued from page 5*)

worked with Ann Waidelech to rebox the recently acquired Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce collection, which filled over 115 archival containers. Joanne also facilitated stage one of the electronic cataloging project by doing card catalog searching. She has most recently been working on an electronic inventory of the Dane County Historical Society's own records. Joanne is a lifelong Dane County resident and a Madison Central High School graduate.



Mike Bovre

Mike Bovre has also been involved in many facets of volunteer work at the Records Center. As chair of the archives committee, he has purchased furniture and supplies, organized the metal shelf cleaning and serves as a contact for researchers and other organizations. This latter responsibility may involve anything from answering e-mail inquiries to facilitating donations, including the extensive material from the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce. Also a lifelong resident of Dane County, Mike is deeply involved in the Norwegian

and Swiss communities. He is an accomplished genealogist with several publications to his name and serves as president of Koshkonong Prairie Historical Society.

Other volunteers during the past few years have included Janice Barr who keyed previously completed archives inventories into an electronic format. Janice also entered the titles and authors of over 300 publications in the Municipal Reference Service collection into the electronic library catalog. Janice has since moved to Appleton and is greatly missed. The Records Center has also been fortunate to have had the contributions of two Dane County Parks volunteers, Pat Wilson and Betsy Solomon, who sorted, created folders for and organized newsletters and records.

This article has focused on the volunteers involved in particular projects. There are also numerous people who support work at the Records Center in other ways including donating materials, making contacts, writing proposals, and lending a hand to whatever task might be underway. Thanks to all those who take an active interest and provide the valuable broad base of support needed for a facility such as the Records Center to operate.

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