



Dial-Log



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Herb Hackenburg, EDITOR

Answering a question we've been asked

Where in the heck have you been?

Howdy!

It's been awhile. We'll try to catch you up on all the stuff that's happened to the Telecommunications History Group since we last issued a *Dial-Log*.

Our next issue of *Dial-Log* was ready to go as scheduled - in fact, two of the major history stories and the editorial in this issue were in that issue which never saw any life outside of a word processor. By the time we were ready to mail the newsletter our finances were so bad we couldn't afford the postage. Heck, we couldn't afford the labels.

After we began to receive donations from our membership campaign, make a few coins from our research fee system and received our next-to-last installment from the U S WEST Foundation, the newsletter we had ready to go was so outdated we had to do it over. This is the do-over! Remember, folks who are part of the Telecommunications History Group (THG) family are listed in this newsletter in **bold face**.

We have been busy

It's not like we've been lying around the pool sunbathing. We really have been busy. OK, so I've gone to a couple of ball games at Coors Field and the volunteers have vacationed all over the world — man and woman do not live by history alone, you know.



Collections processed

Not only have we been accessioning our original 43-ton collection, we've accessed other collections as they've come in.

The Jack Schuh collection turned out to be a major deal because with artifacts, a detailed story (for an excerpt, see *The Schuh Box* on page 7 of this newsletter) and Bell System manuals and policies, the collection richly and graphically details the life of a line foreman in Colorado's high country. Two major artifact collections we received because of collocation.

Collocation is the federal law that says the phone company (US WEST) must provide floor space in its central offices to competitive phone companies so they can connect their networks to US WEST's. Pioneer activities located in the central offices are having to move out because the competitive phone companies are demanding the space for *their equipment*. In Montana, the Pioneers were told they had to lose their museum space because the space was needed for collocation. The Montana Pioneers had to send much of their museum material to us because they couldn't afford to pay for rental space. We processed three PBX boards, including one prime 1899 cordless jewel, nearly three tons of radio microwave equipment, and thousands of spare parts.

We've processed a huge insulator

Collection (6,000 insulators) which was not in the greatest shape in the world (it was dirty with dead bugs and live spiders.)

The other collection of artifacts came from the Southwest Bell Pioneers in Kansas City who had been collocated out of town.

We're processing nearly a half-ton of material we received from Pacific Northwest Bell. The PNB collection we've inventoried so far contains many reference books; some excellent business files; several video tapes; a few Bell System published books; a complete collection of the *Cascade Magazine*; and an estimated 6,000 4 x 5 negatives.

The William Santee collection contains the diary, credentials and personal photographs of one of the world's first sound engineers who worked for Western Electric. He accompanied the Warren G. Harding presidential railroad trip across America, in order to keep the world's first public address system operational. The system was manufactured by Western Electric. Santee records in words and snapshots the crash of secret service car killing four agents (near Denver); the President and his wife playing with bears at Yellowstone; the presidential ship being hit by another ship; the Hardings enjoying Alaska; Warren G. catching pneumonia in Alaska and dying before he could return to Washington. We have it all!

We processed the **Louise Schroer** collection, which in reality Louise must have collected from half of the Telephone Pioneers in Denver.

We're now working on a five cubic-foot collection gleaned from U S WEST's main archive. The collection includes blue-prints of the Alexander Graham Bell home in Washington, D. C.; an old photo album; a signed note from Thomas Watson; a collection of Roderick Reid correspondence; a wonderful unpublished history of the first telephone service in Davis County, Utah by Angus Smedley; and more great stuff.

We interrupt this report to report that the mailroom just delivered a large box sent to us from Arizona. It's from our wonderful "Arizona Whirlwind volunteer," Steve Hilsz and contains an extraordinary array of items including original photographs from the 1890s, a scrapbook containing the history of several independent telephone companies in Nebraska, a NWB installer's canvas drop cloth, and an assortment of other fine goodies. Steve, you're so good, we can hardly believe you're real. Thank you much, old friend.



We re-interrupt this report. The paragraph above was written Thursday afternoon, this Friday morning a second box from Steve arrived. It's more good stuff: a 1910 NWB Outside Plant Department pay-book; a 1934 pocket-sized, seven-page NWB Telephone Employees' Association labor contract; a 1940 edition Bell System Red Cross First Aid manual with an insert on poison gas; and a bunch of other Mountain and NWB manuals, blueprints and sales materials.

The staff has grown

You'll see later in this newsletter some interesting articles by **Jody Georgeson** and **Julianne R. Fletcher**. Allow me to introduce Jody and Julianne.

Jody is our new executive secretary/ bill-payer/invoice sender-outer/researcher/ keep-things-organized-in-spite-of-Herb replacement for Carol Baird. Jody retired from U S WEST in 1998, after 26 years of service. Like Carol, Jody spent much of her career with

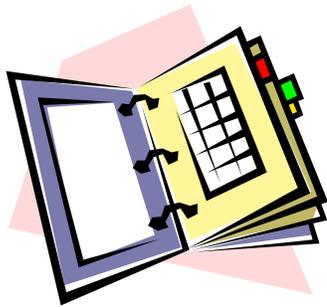
BRI, so she has a lot of experience with support functions. Jody is working on a Library Science and Information Services master's degree at the University of Denver and works 20-hours a week—plus volunteer time at the History Group. In many ways Jody's degree work fits nicely with our archive mission, so working with Julianne and myself, Jody is getting involved with research projects and accessioning collections. Jody finished writing her finding aid on the Schroer Collection about an hour before Julianne finished her finding aid (the last step in processing a collection, it's a synopsis of the collection to help researchers) on the Schuh Collection, thus Jody wrote the THG's *first* finding aid.

Speaking of **Julianne**, one of the items on immediate past-chairman Bob Runice's agenda before he turned over the reins to Jim O'Boyle (former Mountain Bell Vice President of Marketing and our new chairman), was to hire our first professionally trained archivist. That's Julianne. Julianne and her husband, Joe, live in Fort Collins. Julianne recently earned her master's degree in Public History from Colorado State University and spends 24 hours a week, 20 paid, 4 volunteer at the archive. Julianne and Joe have a son studying law at Fordham University and a daughter who is the American representative for Japan's largest entertainment booking agency. Joe, a former bank officer in the Fletcher's hometown of Walla Walla, Wash., followed Julianne to Colorado. Julianne seems to be thrilled with what we're doing and the challenge we face while we're doing it. She's also gently and tastefully informing us how to do accession properly. *For example, I've learned is that while we operate Colorado's fifth largest archive, we don't "archive," we "accession."*

As you may know Carol's husband, Ralph, died of cancer over a year ago. Naturally, Ralph's illness was rough on Carol, and the energy she had left over from helping Ralph through his treatments she completely spent on the History Group and the volunteers. One of Carol's old BRI buddies, now working

for the State of Colorado, offered her a project coordinator job. It meant more money than we could afford, full-time work for the duration of the project, then time off with the chance to go back on another project when she was ready. Carol took the job, after arranging for Jody to replace her at THG.

Recently the whole gang met Carol for lunch. There was a lot of hugging. Carol misses the volunteers and the fascinating work at the History Group, but the state job seems ideal for her situation.



Publicity

If you happen to be watching your favorite PBS station when it broadcasts “*Telephone*” from “*The American Experience*” series, watch the credits at the end - you’ll see us listed. We did some work for the show’s producers; we just can’t remember exactly what we did. Since the last newsletter, the History Group has been the subject of two newspaper interviews. The *Westword*, Denver’s major free newspaper, did a feature on us. The good news was that the feature was complimentary and factual. The bad news was that our feature was planted right in the middle of a multi-page major feature blasting U S WEST’s service. The most recent interview was by a *Rocky Mountain News* reporter, and lasted nearly three hours. We haven’t seen that story, yet.

Enter this reader’s contest and win a unique prize

Notice that Julianne’s middle initial is “R.” When we asked her about her middle name, she said it wasn’t her favorite name, but it was from the Bible and she’d tell us if we guessed it. **Lee Anderson**, one of our volunteers, went home and after careful study of the *Bible*, called Julianne to offer his educated guess. Julianne said he was right, but now neither Lee nor Julianne will tell the name, so we’re asking you to submit your suggested names. The first reader to call (303-296-1221), e-mail (telcomhist@aol.com) or mail the winning name will receive an authentic antique telephone company stock certificate.

Volunteers

On a serious note, we lost four of our stalwart volunteers since the last newsletter, but we’ve gained five new ones. Jerry Butler died. We miss his cheerfulness, the stories of his ballroom dancing antics, and his work on our photo collection. **Russ DeFeyter** also passed away. Russ was homebound, but he was constantly finding us reference material on the Internet. For the brief time she volunteered, **Dottie Graham** was as regular as the sunrise, but her past cancer problems returned and she’s no longer able to help us. We miss her snappy wit. **Lowell Todd** is another volunteer who no longer can make it down to the archives because of medical problems. We miss his stories about being a NWB right-of-way guy in Iowa and his work on our color-photograph collection.

Old News

Here are a few items from the Dial-Log that didn't get printed. *Remember, these stories were written several months ago.* As I write this, there are pickets marching around the building. U S WEST and the Communications Workers of America (CWA) have gone out of their way to accommodate us. This means our staff and volunteers are able to cross the picket lines to work in our archives which is located in the U S WEST Denver Service Center. It also means stories of past strikes dominate the conversation around the coffeepot. Our volunteers have marched in and crossed picket lines. Humor dominates our strike stories. There is some irony in our THG family in this strike situation. THG volunteer **Bill Sarber** was Mountain Bell's number two negotiator for many years. Sitting on the union side of the table in those days was current History Group Director **Walter Maulis**. Walt was an International Vice President of the CWA at the time. Bill allowed that he and Walt were available as consultants and could probably settle the while thing in a couple of hours, especially if Walt would spring for dinner.

In a more serious tone, Bill noted that in his and Walt's day national issues were settled between AT&T and the unions, while "we were left to settle local issues, which sometimes got a little sticky. Today, U S WEST is negotiating a national contract. That puts a lot more pressure on both sides of the table."

Thanks to **Georg Ek** and **Steve Hilsz**, the volunteer we fondly call the "Arizona Whirlwind," our red Ericofon is working and connected to the network. It happily chirps when someone calls the main THG number.

Steve is a legend around here. Most of us find it hard to comprehend how one guy can do so much, so fast on such a grand scale. Steve's story is fodder for a future newsletter.

Anyway, Steve met **Cliff Moyer** at an antique telephone show in Abilene. Steve found out that Cliff was the custodian of the remains of the original NWB Museum collection in Omaha. A few years ago, the museum's better items were given to a large museum located in Omaha's original railroad depot. Cliff was worried that USW would be reclaiming the space where the remaining NWB collection was being stored.

A few days after the Abilene show, **Steve**, his wife **Barbra**, and their little dog piled into the van and drove from Salome, Ariz., to Omaha. Then Steve and Cliff loaded the van until the tires were nearly flat. Steve and family then slowly drove to the History Group archives in Denver.

Steve delivered so much NWB/Moyer material we haven't been able to inventory it yet. We do know that we have several hundred pristine 8x10 black and white photographs of every telephone building in Nebraska; some rare Western Electric catalogs; complete collections of Pioneer commemorative glass Bell paperweights and Pilgrim hat insulators; a collection of 1960-1980 telephones including a couple of one-of-a-kind experimental 10-button phones. The prize is a circa 1920's-30's "French cradle" 202 dial set. Factory-painted green and it's never been used!



AN EDITORIAL

I'm sorry Miss Winstanley !

Soon after joining Ohio Bell's Public Relations Department in 1962, I was introduced to Miss Mabel Winstanley, the "guardian of the photo file." Miss Winstanley was a trained librarian and she watched over Ohio Bell's photo collection with the zealouslyness akin to a she-wolf guarding her pups.

We writers, advertising managers, and media relations flacks were allowed to use the collection's 50,000 pictures (many of them original prints) for any company purpose. When we neglected to return a picture to its protective sleeve and its original file folder, after a reasonable time we could expect a firm, polite note urging its return. If our tardy behavior persisted we could expect a sterner note from our boss.

After the first rather blunt note from my boss, I made it a point to respond to Miss Winstanley's first note. Now I've been informed that Miss Winstanley's carefully archived photo collection as well as similar collections from the former Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin and Indiana Bell companies have been given away to assorted local history organizations. A Telecommunications History Group member and Ameritech manager called the office to express his deep concern about his company giving away its heritage, and in a way, his heritage.

It seems to me that Ameritech's leaders have decided to join the managers from Bell South Corporation, Southern New England Telephone, and General Telephone of the Southwest to either junk their company's history entirely,

reputation, and is currently busy working

deny public access to their history, or fritter it away to organizations which don't have the dedication and knowledge of the industry to match that of us retired telephone employees.

This short-sighted action brings to mind several questions:

1) What is the reasoning behind allowing major segments of the telecommunications industry's history to leave the industry?

2) Why the urge to rid a company of its heritage? Especially a heritage which is so rich, so important to the nation's history, so vital in telling the story thousands of dedicated employees-- many of whom lost their lives while saving or restoring telephone service in the face of flood, fire, earthquake, ice and blizzard.

3) Why lose control of a unique source (one which the new kids on the telecommunications block can't match) of advertising themes; directory ads; television commercials; newspaper, internet and magazine features and other bottom line items?

4) Why allow all of this vital, rich historic material to leave the industry when the Telecommunications History Group's board of directors, volunteers, staff and facilities are totally dedicated to saving the telecommunications industry's history?

5) Why does cable television, one of those new kids in the telecommunications neighborhood, already have a fully funded national archive and museum (located at the University of Denver) while the older, much more historically viable telephone industry is cutting off its historical nose to spite its archival face?

A board of directors, staff and volunteer force made up of retired and active telecommunications workers (spiced with a high-quality mix of history and archive professionals) has been working for more than seven years to establish a national telecommunications archive. This force has already built the fifth largest archive in the state of Colorado, has established a national

I don't remember volunteering to work with a

on a massive funding effort.

One other thing, while we were able to add the GTE of the Southwest archives to our collection, we lost out on one of the largest, private collections in the world because our representatives arrived on the scene after the owner's death. The collection is headed for Germany.

Yes, Miss Winstanley, I wish you were still around--I've got some folks who need to receive one of your notes.

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The

Schuh Box

by R. Jack Schuh

Editor's note: Jack Schuh (which is German for 'shoe' and is pronounced 'shoe,') is a retired outside plant foreman who spent much of his career working in the Colorado's high mountain country. Jack put his memories on paper, claiming "they're mostly true." We're sharing some of them with you readers as a reminder that placing phone service in U S WEST country was and is not all fun and games, although Jack seemed to have found his share along the way.

We find our hero working as a rookie lineman in Minturn one winter in the early 1950s. He was bunking at the infamous "52 rooms and a bath" Minturn Hotel. Jack's long-suffering foreman was Elton Carpenter.

Carpenter rented a horse from a local miner. I was introduced to the miner while he was saddling the horse. It was a very large horse. It looked like an aircraft carrier from the back.

As I was hanging my belt and climbing hooks on the saddle, the hooks

horse, but I must have been selected for some good reason.

On that first trip I had all my winter gear on and the horse took longer steps than mine, so I ran out of air long before he did. I ended up being dragged up the mountain while hanging on to the horse's tail. Once I was breathing so hard my nose started to bleed. The miner looked back and asked if I was all right. Gasping for air, I crooked, "Yeah, I'm OK." He took my at my lying word and didn't stop until the horse began to gasp. Once we reached the high point of the day's trip, my work began. As we came back down the mountain the horse pulled a circuit wire back over the trail that we had just forged. The horse had carried the wire up. I put on my climbing hooks and belt. I kept the wires straight between the poles, climbed the pole (later, I learned to stand on the saddle), placed a pole bracket (a wooden, threaded peg which slanted out from the pole to which it was secured by two nails), screwed a glass insulator on each peg, and draped the wires over the pegs. It made for a long day.

After a couple of days experience, it was just the horse and me. I went to the barn, got on the horse which the miner had saddled, and rode to work. The horse was so big the saddle looked like a postage stamp on his back, and when I got on, my legs stuck nearly straight out on both sides.

The job required that I haul rings of pole brackets and bags of insulators up the trail. The brackets were tied together at one end and made a "wheel of brackets" *line* about three feet in diameter. I tied a "wheel" on the front of the saddle and they hung down on both sides of the horse's shoulders. I tied bags of insulators to the back of the saddle, one on each side. I'd ride along the telephone line, stopping at each pole to do my thing. It was a breeze. The horse and I got the routine down.

UNTIL.

(spikes) slipped and struck the horse. It suddenly dawned on me that climbing hooks are very similar to spurs. The horse thought so too. The rodeo was on!

When the horse doubled up to buck, the brackets on his shoulders dug in. When the horse came down from his buck, the insulators crashed down on his flanks. I really wanted to get off that horse. I'm sure the feeling was mutual. My problem was that one of my oversized overshoes was stuck in the stirrup.



The horse and I put on a hell of a show in the snow. We bucked all over that mountain meadow. I stayed on the horse, but the brackets and insulators went flying. After we stopped, the horse and I went all over the meadow picking up brackets and insulators.

The horse forgave me for sticking him, and I was much more careful when I hung my belt and climbing hooks on the saddle.

That horse and I worked together for several weeks that winter. We'd greet each other in the morning and I'd brush him down and put him in his stall with some oats and fresh hay at night. We weren't a bad team, me and that horse-- even if I was the first one of the crew to work in the morning and the last one home at night.

have nearly 1,000 linear feet of local directories, spanning the years from the

VOLUNTEER REPORT

By Jody Georgeson

Our volunteers continue to be the backbone of our organization. So far this year (EOM August) they have donated nearly 3,000 hours. This represents approximately \$75,000 if we were to pay their salaries!

We're fortunate to have volunteers with varied interests and expertise. A good example is **George Ek**. George is involved in the history of technology - especially the literature and the artifacts of telephony. His interest in Sweden, New Zealand, and Great Britain's telephones extends from their national postal systems to North American manufacturers and independent telephone companies. He works with the circuit diagrams and Bell System Practices, and with their counterparts as used by domestic independents and national telephone administrations abroad. George also works with artifacts.

Several of our volunteers perform traditional archive activities such as inventory, preservation, cataloging, and database entry. **Ken Pratt, Bill Sarber, and Dale Norblom** have been processing an enormous amount of material from Northwestern Bell, Mountain Bell and Pacific Northwest Bell Archives. Their activities will make it possible to find information needed by historians and researchers. **Bruce Amsbury** is our "jack of all trades", willing to lend a hand with whatever needs doing, from labeling files to building shelves.

Directories are the most often accessed resources in our archives. **Betty Vigil and Terry Quirke** are making that access easier by cataloging each and every directory in our collection. Quite a task when you realize we

pair of rhinestone earrings in the shape of candlestick phones). Documents from Louise

1890's through the present.

Lee Anderson's most recent project is to organize and catalog all the books and serials (magazines, newsletters, etc.) in our collection. Lee, himself, recently had his sixth book published – *Nickola Tesla: Guided Weapons and Computer Technology*. Congratulations, Lee! We'll look forward to adding an autographed copy to our shelves.

Thank goodness we have computer literate volunteers! **Jerry Wild** keeps our computers running and continually upgraded. A Plant employee for 38 years, Jerry is also our telephone technical advisor. He and George will be helping Herb with the Training Center project. **Mike Flavin** designs our databases, so we can catalog (and find) materials in our collection. Dale designed and is managing our web site, <http://hometown.aol.com/telcomhist/>



We also have volunteers that we seldom get to see. **Louise Schroer** collects and sends us materials from other retirees. Louise has been responsible for obtaining some of our most wonderful memorabilia (my personal favorite is a

Carey Macdonald

Director, Public Policy - U S WEST

represent a comprehensive history of the Frederick H. Reid chapter of the Pioneers. **Kathy Mrowka, T.R. Scott, and Heather Shepard** work full time in the U S WEST Corporate Library and volunteer at THG after the rest of us have gone home.

Board of Directors

The Telecommunications Group Board of Directors also volunteer their time and talents, and deserve a special thank you from the Group. Here is a list of our current Board Members:

James O'Boyle, President

V.P, Marketing (ret.) - Mountain Bell

Eleanor Gehres, Vice President

Director, Western History Department (ret.)
Denver Public Library

Ken Roper, Treasurer

Director, Treasury – U S WEST

Karen Tatelman, Secretary

Senior Attorney - U S WEST

Joel Barker

Director, Rocky Mountain Region –
National Archives

John C. Darrow

Senior Software Engineer - U S WEST DEX

Laurence W. DeMuth, Jr.

EVP General Counsel & Secretary (ret.) –
U S WEST, Inc.

Howard P. Doerr

EVP/CFO (ret.) - U S WEST, Inc.

Michael A. Flavin

Executive Director (ret.) - Bell Labs

Dr. Monys Hagen

Professor of Business History –
Metropolitan State College

John J. Herbolich

Director, Western Network - AT&T

Susan Keesen

Director, Law Department - Media One

inventoried and put into appropriate encasements and containers after the removal of damaging

Region 3 V. P. - Telephone Pioneers
of America

Walt Maulis

International Vice President (ret.) –
CWA

Mary Riffle

Carrier-Wholesale - U S WEST

Robert E. Runice

President, Commercial Development
Division and Vice President (ret.) –
U S WEST

Jack Shea

Region 3 Vice President (ret.) -
Telephone Pioneers of America

Robert K. Timothy

President (ret.) - Mountain Bell
Telephone Co.

George A. Walker

V. P. (retired) - Pacific Northwest
Bell

**A Report from the
Archivist**

by Julianne Fletcher

A collection, in archival terms, is a group of documents, records, and/or ephemera from an individual or company. The collection is first accessioned - which means taking physical custody and assuming legal and administrative control over it, and processing it. Processing means being

things such as tape, rubber bands, staples, and paper clips.

Archives and manuscript collections are arranged according to the principles of **provenance** and **original order**. The principle of provenance means that records and documents are held according to the way the creator or sources maintained them, rather than according to subject or other classification. Provenance also means that records of a given creator must not be intermingled with those of other creators. Original order means that the internal file arrangement should be retained if feasible.

The next step in the preparation of a collection is creating a **finding aid** to make the collection understandable and usable for researchers. A finding aid consists of the history of the collector and the collection, including an explanation of how it came to be at The Telecommunications History Group. The size and scope of the collection are described, as well as the arrangement of the documents.

A recently processed collection in the archives is one belonging to Jack Schuh. Jack contributed documents and artifacts spanning his almost 40-year career with the Bell System. After the collection was analyzed, it was obvious that this is a history of the United States from a telephone company perspective. The new "pre-wired" home of the future in the 1950's, the addition of seat belts to commercial vehicles in the 1960's, and the fuel shortage in the 1970's reveal how Americans lived during those decades, as told through phone company memos and publications.

The archival shelves at The Telecommunications History Group hold history worth saving. We know there are treasures not yet mined in the many boxes left to process, and it is exciting to survey each collection.



When the telephone rings and a research request comes to the staff at The Telecommunications History Group, we do not usually hear feedback about the results. This week was an exception. We had a call from a man attempting to locate an old sweetheart to whom he had been engaged. She married someone else and so did he. Now, as a widower, he wondered how she was and wanted to find her.

We looked in phone books from the 1930's to find the location of her family somewhere in Colorado, which was only a start. We located the correct town and our client took it from there. He sent a thank you note this week with his payment for our services, and included a donation. He located his former fiancée and had spoken to her by phone. It makes us feel good to be of service to such people.

THG is now an official 'American Treasure'

The Telecommunications History Group Digitization Project has been designated an official project of *Save America's Treasures*. According to Tiane C. Benson, director, "*Save America's Treasures* is a public-private partnership between the White House Millennium Council and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, dedicated to the celebration and preservation of our nation's irreplaceable historic and cultural legacy."

The Washington, D.C. based organization has reviewed our plan to digitize our historic telephone book collection. They will now use their considerable national presence and influence to help us fund and apply for additional funding for the \$400,000 project.

Yes, our complete digitizing project will cost \$400,000, which is eight times our normal total annual budget. Unless we can get a "Big Daddy" to pop for the whole deal, we'll have to break it down into pieces we can afford. The folks at *Save America's Treasures* tell us they'll consider a formal funding request from us and help us go after other funding, and look for a "Big Daddy," too.

Please Note: Because we throw around a number like \$400,00, doesn't mean we have hundred dollar bills lying around the archive with nothing to do. We're planning to launch our annual fund-raising campaign next month. Since we don't yet know how the QWEST buyout will affect our major supporter, the U S WEST Foundation, we desperately need every financial contribution we can beg. Your contribution letter will be coming soon.

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