



NORTH TORONTO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

North Toronto Town Hall

VOL. 41 NO. 4

WINTER 2017



Toronto island's human polar bear, J. W. Barnes, takes his daily dip in the lee of the masses of ice on the long breakwater. He prefers winter to summer for bathing in Lake Ontario. *Toronto Star*, 1945. TPL

Winter Programme

Join us at 7:10 for refreshments.



Wednesday, 31 January, 7:30 p.m.

DON STATION:

THE LITTLE STATION WITH THE BIG HISTORY

Built in 1896 by the Canadian Pacific Railway, Don is the last surviving 19th century railway station in Toronto and is currently open to the public at the Toronto Railway Museum in Roundhouse Park. In this illustrated talk **Derek Boles**, Chief Historian of the Toronto Railway Museum, will cover the history of the building and railway development in the Don Valley.

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Wednesday, 28 February, 7:30 p.m.

YORK COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

An archaeological dig was conducted near Elgin Mills Road and Yonge Street in 1995 and the remnants of a log cabin were found. According to oral history the cabin was somehow connected to the Underground Railroad. Researcher **Guylaine Pétrin** will describe her findings concerning the Black families who occupied the site.

NOTE: A brief Annual General Meeting will precede this programme.

Wednesday, 28 March, 7:30 p.m.

MARJORIE PICKTHALL (1883-1922): CANADA'S DARLING POET

In her time Marjorie Pickthall, poet and librarian at Victoria University Library, was Canada's most loved literary voice but today her work is relatively unknown. Join **Fiona Smith**, Librarian at the Toronto Reference Library, as she explores the life of this remarkable independent woman in this illustrated talk.



Flooding, North Toronto, 29 March, 1916. CTA

The Society meets at the Northern District Library, 40 Orchard View Boulevard (one block north of Eglinton, just west of Yonge) at 7:30 pm on the last Wednesday of each month from September to November & January to May. Programmes are free and are open to the public. Our co-sponsor is the Northern District Branch of the Toronto Public Library.

President's Message

Best wishes for 2018, as the North Toronto Historical Society enters its 43rd year.

Our annual general meeting will be held at the beginning of the monthly programme in February. If you are interested in taking a more active role in the Society, please contact a member of our executive committee. We would be happy to welcome new members and ideas.

I would like to thank our executive for their contributions during 2017 – Hilary Dawson, newsletter editor; Bill Dawson, treasurer; Alex Grenzebach, membership co-ordinator; Flo Morson, secretary; and Doug Campbell, Brian Dunfield and Ken Pon, members-at-large. Special thanks to Janet and Brian Dunfield and to Elizabeth and John Warrenner, who helped out with refreshments at our meetings. Alan Barry, Branch Head of Northern District Library and librarian Bonnie Ing facilitated the arrangements for our meetings and booked the equipment used by speakers. Thanks also to members who contributed to the work of the Society through their financial donations.

2017 featured many successful programmes with topics ranging from “Toronto’s Movie Theatres of Yesteryear” to “A Culinary Tour of Chinatown.” In February NTHS member Hilary Dawson gave a very informative presentation on “Finding 19th Century Black History in Toronto.” Our annual Fall walk “A Journey Through Pre-Confederation North Toronto” was part of the Canada 150: MomentTO events.

Unfortunately 2017 also saw the loss of one of the landmark buildings from the Town of North Toronto era. The Bank of Montreal (1907) at Yonge and Roselawn fell to the wrecker’s ball on January 21. The public outcry which followed underlined the importance of safeguarding heritage commercial properties in the future.

Looking forward to seeing you at our programmes in 2018,

Lynda Moon, President

The North Toronto Historical Society Commemorates Canada 150

In October 2017 the North Toronto Historical Society commemorated the Sesquicentennial of Confederation with a number of events. The month got off to a successful start on Sunday October 1 with the walking tour “A Journey Through Pre-Confederation North Toronto” which focused on the farms and families of the area during the rural era. The tour began at Lytton Blvd. with the story of the Snider Family and ended at the plaque to Hon. William McDougall, Father of Confederation, at Yonge and Lawrence. William McDougall had connections to North Toronto - he was raised on his grandfather’s farm at Glengrove and Yonge and later married Amelia Easton and moved to her family farm north of Lawrence on the east side of Yonge. Many of their 11 children were born on that farm known as Millbank. An exhibit “William McDougall, Father of Confederation: The North Toronto Connections” was held at Locke Library.



NTHS Fall Walk at McDougall Plaque, Lawrence E.

On October 19 at North York Civic Centre award winning author and historian Christopher Moore, gave a lecture entitled “William McDougall: Dreams and Disappointments of a Confederation Era Toronto Politician.” This was presented in partnership with the North York Historical Society, Dictionary of Canadian Biography, North Toronto Historical Society and the City of Toronto.

Lynda Moon

Fall Lecture Series

SEPTEMBER: Doug Taylor

Toronto's Movie Theatres of Yesteryear

By the late 1940s, movie theatres had become as much part of any community as the church. Films had provided Depression-era escapism, and sustained morale during the war. Doug took us back to the local “nabes” (frequented by him and his pals as kids), and to the luxurious “movie palaces” of the golden age of cinema.

Churches (and Doug’s grandmother) disapproved of movies, because they first ran in burlesque houses, although usually at a different time of day from the girlie shows. Ironically, Doug saw his first movie in church. It was the heartbreaking true story of *The Fighting Sullivans*, five brothers who all died in the sinking of the USS *Juneau* in 1942.

Saturday afternoon matinees at the local theatre were a must for kids. For 10c you could see two feature films, a cartoon, a serial, trailers, and a newsreel. A nickel got you popcorn, and an additional nickel provided candy. The serials ended with a cliff-hanger to bring you back next week.

About 1943, Doug remembers being taken with friends to see “Snow White” at Radio City on Bathurst south of St. Clair, which opened in 1936. Later, it was the first movie theatre he and his brother were allowed to take the bus to (3 cent fare) unaccompanied by an adult.

One of the great movie palaces was Loew’s Downtown, on Yonge Street near Queen, which opened in 1913. A Loew’s show featured half a dozen vaudeville acts, a silent movie and a newsreel. In 1929 it screened the first talkie; and in 1939 premiered “Gone with the Wind” and “The Wizard of Oz.” Loew’s is now the Elgin Theatre.

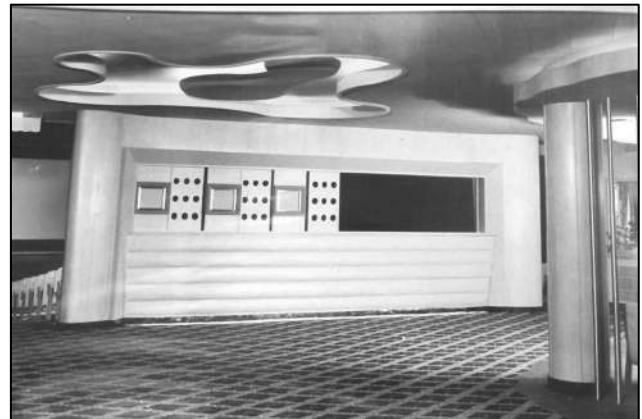
LOEW'S	CONTINUOUS 12 NOON TO 11 P.M.
YONGE STREET THEATRE	AFF., 10c, 15c., EVG., 10c, 15c, 25c.
Phone W. 3800—PLAYING HIGH-CLASS VAUDEVILLE—Box Seats Reserved.	
ELSIE WHITE Queen of Symphonized Melodies FRANK BOHN Presents BROWN, FLETCHER TRIO A Story in Song CHARLIE CHAPLIN CASTING MELLORS Emotional Aerial Marvellous	[Next Week] THE GINGER SISTER— From Ginnegalle A Gripping Dramatic Playlet FORD & TRACY "CUM IN VAUDEVILLE" "A NIGHT AT THE SHOW" Elizabeth—MAYNE & FERN—Ray In Bits of Song and Nifty Numbers

Toronto Star, 29 January, 1916

When Shea’s Hippodrome Theatre opened in 1914, it was the largest vaudeville house in Canada. In 1926 it was renovated to better feature movies, with the addition of a Wurlitzer organ which rose dramatically from the floor. Built at Queen and Terauley—now Bay—the site is now the east side of Nathan Phillips Square.

An early “local” was the Allan Theatre, which opened in 1917 on Richmond East at Victoria. It was a good distraction from the dark days of World War 1, featuring silent movies which sometimes had orchestral accompaniment. In 1923 it was renamed the Tivoli. It closed in 1965.

Sadly, that has been the case for most of the locals, as we know all too well in North Toronto. In 1921 the Bedford opened at Bedford Park, and in the 1940s it was renamed the Park. 1930 saw the Hollywood, on Yonge in Deer Park. This was the first cinema in Toronto to be built specifically for “talkies.” In 1947 the Odeon Fairlawn opened on Yonge, and the Glendale on Avenue Road at Brookdale. This was one of the first theatres to provide parking: it is now a car dealership.



The Nortown at Eglinton and Bathurst, 1948.

Two of our picture palaces survive as event spaces: the Capitol on Yonge north of Eglinton, and the Eglinton Grand west of Avenue Road.

MORE ABOUT MOVIE THEATRES

Doug Taylor’s website: tayloronhistory.com

Three books by Doug Taylor:

- *Toronto Theatres and the Golden Age of the Silver Screen.* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2014.)
- *Toronto’s Local Movie Theatres of Yesteryear.* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2016.)
- *Toronto Then and Now.* (London, England: Pavilion Press, 2016.)

OCTOBER: **Marta O'Brien**

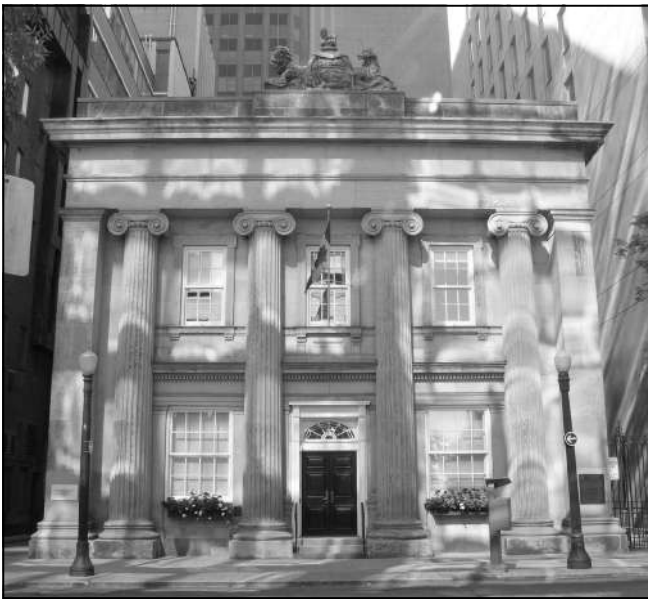
Cumberland & Storm: Landmark Masters
by Marta O'Brien

Cumberland & Storm formed the most important architectural partnership in Victorian Toronto.

Frederic (Fred) Cumberland was born in England of humble origins in 1820. He worked briefly for several engineers and architects. At 27, Fred emigrated to Toronto, the transition eased though his wife's connection to the prominent Ridout family. He had a brief partnership with Thomas Ridout Jr. and designed buildings across Ontario.

William Storm was born in England in 1826. His father was a builder who emigrated to Canada. When scaffolding collapsed on his dad's building site, 18-year-old William almost died and decided to design rather than build buildings. He apprenticed with Toronto's leading architect, William Thomas.

Cumberland met Storm at the remains of St James Church after the Great Fire of 1849. When Cumberland won the competition to design a new cathedral, Storm prepared some drawings. They became partners in 1852 and oversaw the completion of Cumberland's Seventh Post Office.



Seventh Post Office, 10 Toronto St (1851-53).

Photo: Marta O'Brien

This dignified Ohio limestone Classical Revival building had living quarters above for the postmaster and his family. This fine building was saved from demolition when purchased by E.P. Taylor as the office for Argus Corporation. It's now home to an investment firm.

Unfortunately, the Mechanics' Institute no longer stands. It was built at Church and Adelaide between 1851 and 1861. Inside the grand stone building, working people could attend lectures, take classes, and use the library. Concerts and balls were held in the double-height domed Music Hall. This Cumberland & Storm structure served as Toronto's first free public library until 1907. After use by the federal government, it was replaced by a service station parking lot circa 1950.

Osgoode Hall is an architectural treasure. The oldest part of the building dates from 1829 and there have been numerous additions since then. The current centre block was designed by Cumberland & Storm and completed in 1857. It includes the stunning Law Library. As a solo architect, Storm returned to Osgoode Hall to design the intricate iron fence (1866), Examination Hall and Classrooms (1880-81) and Law School (1890).

Cumberland & Storm designed several grand houses. The Hall (1858) at Bathurst and Dundas was the home of Colonel Sir Casimir Gzowski, while Sherbourne Villa (1856-58) was built for Thomas Ridout. Both large homes were buff brick in the Italianate style with arched windows and a shallow-pitched roof topped by iron cresting. Neither house has survived.

Cumberland & Storm's masterpiece is certainly the building that is now University College. The picturesque High Victorian style design uses historical sources in new and inventive ways. The U-shaped building contained the entire university: classrooms, offices, student and staff residences, kitchen, dining-hall, library, and convocation hall. Inside is a richly carved stone arcade with a 2-storey atrium and stained glass windows above a colourful tile floor. On Feb 14, 1890 a tray of lighted oil lamps was dropped and the ensuing fire gutted the building (except for the round Chemistry School, which had been separated due to fear of fire!). The much-loved building was restored.

Fred Cumberland's own house was called Pendarves, and was built on St. George St. in 1859-60 while he and Storm were working on the University. This buff brick Italianate home had 33 rooms and as a centre of social life in Toronto

Cumberland & Storm continues on page 5

Cumberland & Storm continued from page 4

entertained the future King Edward VII. Now called Cumberland House, it's home to the Centre for International Experience—a place for international students to find services.

The Cumberland & Storm partnership was dissolved in 1863. Cumberland wanted to spend time on his numerous other interests. He was a director of several transportation companies and banks, and in the military he formed a regiment and earned the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. From 1867 to 1874, Cumberland was a Conservative member of the Ontario legislature. He had to resign as an MP in Ottawa when a new law forbade serving in both the provincial legislature and House of Commons. He was instrumental in incorporating the Ontario Jockey Club. An active cricketer, he was president of the Toronto Cricket Club. Cumberland married Wilmot Mary Bramley and they had seven children.

William Storm went on to design many fine buildings including churches, schools, grand houses, commercial buildings, and civic buildings. He was a valued teacher: a number of young Toronto architects apprenticed in his office. Professionally very active, Storm examined candidates in architectural drafting courses offered at the Mechanic's Institute and founded several Arts organizations. The inaugural meeting for what became the Ontario Architects Association was held in Storm's office in 1887, and he was selected as the OAA's first president in 1889 (described as "a richly deserved honour"). Storm had close ties to the Methodist church, was a freemason, and a lieutenant in the militia. He married Agnes Cotterill when he was 56 and they had four children.

Storm made an important connection with Emerson Coatsworth, a prominent Methodist, city commissioner, and chair of the Public School Board in 1873. Storm designed his house and Coatsworth helped him get the commission to design five public schools (all built in 1874). The Inglewood High School on Sackville south of King is an example.

The main building for Victoria College at U of T (1892) is probably Storm's finest, and was his final work. Storm designed an elaborate Richardsonian Romanesque structure in dichromatic sandstone

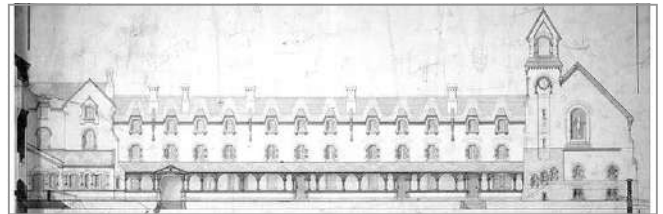


Victoria College, University of Toronto (1902)

Photo: Marta O'Brien

with some polished granite columns typical of the style. One can spend rewarding time examining the intricate stone carvings and grand interior details.

Storm died suddenly of a stroke in 1892, aged 66. He was highly regarded by clients, colleagues, and the community at large. Cumberland had died at home, aged 61, in 1881. According to contemporary accounts, Cumberland had great personal magnetism, boundless energy, rare executive ability, and a quick temper. The *Globe* obituary noted "he was a man of strong individuality, and in the positions which he occupied necessarily excited a good deal of antagonism." As a contrast, the Board of Regents of Victoria College described Storm as a "Christian gentleman whose professional ability and urbanity of manner have made it a pleasure to be associated with him." It sounds as if opposites attracted and the partnership gave Toronto some of its greatest buildings.



Receive the *NTHS UPDATER* by email!

Would you like us to remind you of upcoming meetings and heritage events with an electronic newsletter?

Email me at alexg@alumni.uwaterloo.ca and I will add you to the distribution list. *We will not give out your email address.*

Alex. Grenzbach

NOVEMBER: Donna Jean MacKinnon
Newsgirls:
Gutsy Pioneers in Canada's Newsrooms

The newsroom was seen as a man's world in the mid 20th century, yet several women made their mark as front line reporters between 1930 and 1960. Donna Jean MacKinnon, former *Toronto Star* reporter, interviewed ten of these notable women for her book *Newsgirls: Gutsy Pioneers in Canada's Newsrooms* (Toronto: Leaping Lion Books, 2017).

Many editors assumed that a female writer would be content contributing to the Women's Page and writing feel-good "sob sister" stories. Although considered "fluff" by male colleagues, keeping the social columns full required developing contacts and keeping her ear to the ground. Several of Donna Jean's subjects cut their teeth on weddings and flower shows. When newsroom desks became vacant after men enlisted during World War 2, these women had the skills to fill the empty chairs.

The best known writer in the book is undoubtedly social activist June Callwood. Her newspaper career began as a 16-year-old cub reporter with the *Brantford Expositor* in 1941. She was soon hired by the *Toronto Globe & Mail*, then went on to become a freelance writer.

Dorothy Howarth first worked for the *Regina Leader-Post*, then moved to the *Toronto Telegram*. She was a tenacious investigator and an evocative writer of human interest stories. In 1949, the first year of the National Newspaper Award, she won for her story about the eve of Newfoundland's entry into Confederation. Travelling to villages and outposts, she recorded (on paper) the emotions of Newfoundlanders. Howarth had the knack for interviewing ordinary people and following hunches. She was nicknamed "The Sponge" because of her ability to soak up all the details of a story and communicate them. She had more scoops than any of her contemporaries. She died in 2009.

READ DOROTHY HOWARTH'S AWARD-WINNING ARTICLE:

<https://thewalrus.ca/confederates/DorothyHowarth,%20New%20Province%20Tomorrow>, originally appeared in the *Toronto Telegram* on March 31, 1949.

Olive Dickason also began her career with the *Regina Leader-Post* in the 1940s, then moved to the *Toronto Globe & Mail*, where she was Fashion Editor from 1955-1967. She also



wrote book reviews and human interest stories. As a young adult she first became aware of her Métis roots when she met relatives in Regina. She left the *Globe* to pursue an M.A. in aboriginal history, but had to fight academics who claimed that there was no such thing. In 1977 she was granted the first Ph.D. in indigenous history in Canada, and her thesis was published as a textbook.

Marilyn Dunlop graduated from journalism school and joined the *London Free Press*, writing wedding announcements. In 1949 she was hired by the *Toronto Telegram* and was mentored by Dorothy Howarth. She moved to the *Toronto Star* where she worked as a medical writer, serving as London, England Bureau Chief 1977-1980. In 1987 she won a National Newspaper Award for her story about the first laser brain surgery performed in Toronto.



***Toronto Star*, Nov. 1967**

TPL

Male editors thought it amusing to set young Marilyn Dunlop up with challenges like learning to water ski or drive a truck. She volunteered for more serious experiments, too. Here, she is preparing for motion sickness study at Toronto General Hospital's vertigo unit.

These women had to put up with vocabulary and attitudes that women today would find offensive. They were nicknamed "news hens" (not "news hounds") and were referred to as "girls," as if they not adults. However, the awards they won testify to their determination and the quality of their work.

50 Years Ago

Items from the North Toronto Herald, 1967, contributed by Alex. Grenzebach. The Herald is available at Northern District Library.



According to a report in *Marketing*, “by 1987 the laser beam and space satellites could eliminate the need for mass media that people know today.” A New York advertising executive claimed that “every home will have a communications centre as a primary source of information and entertainment – delivering both still and moving pictures as well as the printed word.” He also predicted that “You’ll do most of your shopping from home.”

A legend



Charlie Conacher was a hockey legend when he played, but to today’s youngsters he is just a figure in Dad’s memory. This exceptional athlete and businessman passed away recently after being ill for a long period of time. He was 58.

The greatest



This is the term Toronto Maple Leaf coach and general manager, Punch Imlach, uses to describe goaltender Johnny Bower. Punch says the 44-year-old Bower is “the greatest athlete in the world today.”

In a report by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, some French-Canadian texts used to teach Canadian history “came under fire” because they “did not resemble similar textbooks used in English Canada.” The report added that “separatist thinking can be traced back to the classroom.”



The *Medical Post* felt that the “odds were too high for heart transplant surgery” even though “there are at least a score of surgical teams that could transplant a human heart as the South African and Brooklyn teams have done.”

The TTC “asked Metro to approve experimental use of a section of Eglinton Ave. East for exclusive use of buses during the rush hours.”

**CLAIRTONE
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MODEL 751 REGENT

Northern Secondary defeated Lawrence Park on the general knowledge TV quiz show “Reach For The Top”, thereby qualifying to compete against the western winners in Vancouver.

At the Kiwanis Music Festival, Lawrence Park’s orchestra took first place in the open class for secondary school orchestras with 87 per cent.

Heritage Calendar

Market Gallery, 2nd floor South St. Lawrence Market, 95 Front Street East

Building Toronto: Stories of the St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood.

Beginning with the Town of York's early modest footprint, this exhibit explores urban development and the civic engagement of its population. Discover how our city's first planned neighbourhood served as the building blocks for Toronto's commercial, cultural, social, and political history. Includes art works from the City of Toronto Art Collection featuring architectural landmarks and neighbourhood character.

DATE: To 24 Feb, 2018

INFO: 416-392-7604

<http://tinyurl.com/odh2xeo>

City of Toronto

First Parliament Project Public Consultation Free Public Lecture

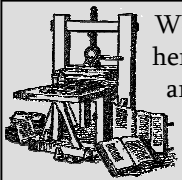
In November 2017, the City of Toronto initiated a new project to develop a Heritage Interpretation Strategy and Master Plan for the publicly-owned First Parliament site located at Front and Parliament Streets in downtown Toronto.

The First Parliament public lecture is an opportunity for interested Torontonians to learn more about the many-layered history of the First Parliament site and how those stories might be told. This community event will include a presentation from the project team and a panel discussion with a number of experts. Attendees will also have the opportunity to ask questions of the project team and panel experts.

DATE: Tues. 6 Feb. 2018, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Enoch Turner Schoolhouse, 106 Trinity St.

INFO: <https://tinyurl.com/ycy5ef5j>



We welcome contributions from members: heritage events and achievements, brief articles and photographs of local history interest.

Submissions for the next Newsletter by April 5 to dawsonbh@rogers.com or call 416-481-6622.

Toronto Postcard Club: 37th Annual Show

Japanese Cultural Centre, 6 Garamond Court (Don Mills & Wynford Dr)

Come to our Show! There are sure to be some century old postcards about your subject in the 1,000s offered for sale. If you like historical images, this show is for you!

DATE: Sun. 25 Feb, 2018, 10:00-5:00

ADMISSION: \$5

INFO: torontopostcardclub.com



Nancy Greene is seeking a repeat performance of last year. The Rossland, B.C., native, is streaking toward her second consecutive World Cup ski championship. Although she got off to a slow start, Canada's ski queen now appears set to conquer all opposition.

North Toronto Herald, 1967

North Toronto Historical Society

An affiliate of the Ontario Historical Society, and a non-profit charitable organization.

NOTE NEW ADDRESS % 283 Deloraine Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M5M 2B2

www.northtorontohistoricalsociety.org

Annual Memberships: Seniors & Students \$5, Adults \$7, Families \$10

2017 Executive (*Directors)

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