

# RANCHO BODEGA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## DID YOU KNOW?

### Bay Becomes Bodega Bay

What is in a name? The towns of Bodega and Bodega Bay are often lumped together as “Bodega.” Until 1941 the town by the bay was simply known as “Bay.” Because there were already too many California towns named “Bay,” the US Postal Service asked our Postmistress, Glenice Carpenter, to come up with a new name. She chose “Bodega Bay.”



To add to naming confusion, the large outer bay beyond the jetties, where the Bodega Rocks are located, bordered to the north by Bodega Head and to the south by Tomales Bay, and popularly called the Pacific Ocean, is “Bodega Bay” on the NOAA’s Mariners Charts.

Meanwhile, the inner harbor surrounded by Bodega Head, Old Town, the Tides Wharf and Lucas Wharf on California Route One and Doran Beach, often referred to as “Bodega Bay,” but it is “Bodega Harbor” on the Marine Charts.

## EARLY SETTLERS IN THE BODEGA TOWNSHIP

by Lois W. Weeth - 2009

Having grown up in Los Angeles County, in 1939 I went to UC Davis. While there, my Dad took me to nearby Woodland to show me the graves of two great grandparents, part of the Gold Rush group. They were farmers who helped feed the miners. Talking to other Aggie students I learned about various other areas in California where their families lived. As a native Californian, I was curious about my home state. When I moved to Bodega Bay in 1981, the local history drew my interest because the influences are so unique.

Until the fall of 1775, the Miwok and Pomo Indians with a rich culture and heritage lived peacefully in the coastal mountains and valleys of what we now call Sonoma County. Their lifestyle revolved around the seasons, hunting and gathering from the land and harvesting the sea and rivers. Little changed over hundreds of generations (literally thousands of years) until the first white sails were spotted off the coast and exploration of the Pacific Coast attracted the Spanish, the Russians, English, and later the Americans. The Bodega Bay area offered very attractive options to the white settlers. There was land for grazing, dairying, and crops; timber for lumber, fishing for food. The Mexican land grants were influences in ownership and mapping of territory. The Russians held land at Fort Ross and inland to Sebastopol, to raise crops to feed their settlement in Sitka. With the help of local and Aleutian Indians, they were heavily involved in the fur trade and in sea otter skins.

Even before moving here, I had an interest in research gathering information about my ancestors, building my family tree. When starting to use a computer for this research, most of the records were in books, on microfiche, on film, and housed in various libraries. As these records were transcribed to computer format, I became acquainted with databases

EXHIBIT 1 - Free Substantive in Bodega Township in the County of Sonoma State of California enumerated by me, on the 24th day of July, 1860. *John Smith*

Post Office *Smith's Ranch* 1860 US Census: Bodega Township: Smith Family

1	2	3	4			5	6			7	8	9	10	11	12
			Value	Sex	Age		Color	Profession, Occupation, or Trade of male person, age and sex, and 10 years of age	Value of Real Estate						
1	20	Male	39	W	White	Farmer	1000	500	Virginia						
2	20	Female	37	F	White				Mass						
3	15	Female	12	F	White				California						
4	10	Male	7	M	White										
5	10	Female	7	F	White										
6	10	Male	7	M	White										
7	10	Female	7	F	White										

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

as a resource for research. Since there were many areas of information not yet available to searching, I embarked on a project to help other researchers by building such a database of early settlers of Bodega Township. If a person is researching specific family groups, indexed lists and references are helpful. For genealogical documentation, public records such as census and vital records are accepted as mostly accurate. These are federal, state, or county records and are open to the public. Using Excel for the database, a chart was built in my computer, indexed by surnames, showing where those individuals appear in census records, listing the page numbers of the census in the column for each census year.

In 1843 Captain Stephen Smith was awarded a Mexican land grant named Rancho Bodega, comprised of eight leagues, approximately 35,200 acres of land. He established a home and headquarters buildings near the present day town of Bodega. California became part of the United States through a treaty with Mexico in 1848. The gold rush hastened its adoption as the 31st State in 1850. Even though governmental procedures were

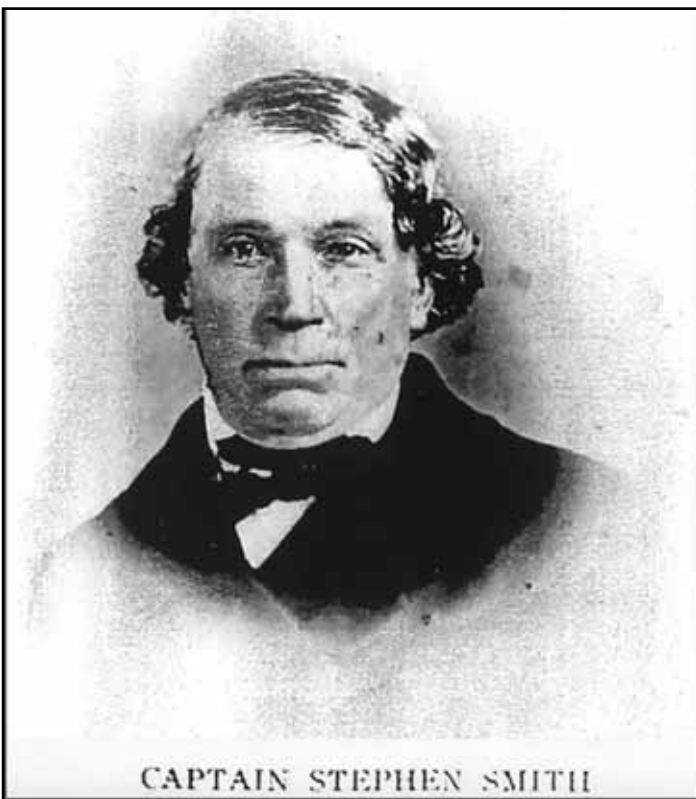
still being developed, counties defined, county seats determined and roads improved, it was decided to include the new state in the 1850 census data taking.

The boundary of Bodega township was composed of Rancho Bodega and part of Estero Americana land grants. This was one of the four named Sonoma County townships at the time. Sparsely populated Bodega Township was re-apportioned in later years until there were finally 14 townships in 1867. In the 1850 census records there were no landmarks or named locations for determining a framework for census records. So census information would start with a group of existing families, such as the Smith family because there was a post office on the Smith Ranch, then expanded to the neighbors, until other families were recognized as being in Sonoma County.

Subsequent census information was collected in 1860, 1870, 1880, and 1890. Most of the national records for the 1890 census were destroyed in a fire in Washington D.C.; in Sonoma County, these names were reconstructed from the Great Register of Voters and from other resources. In the early census years, the legal status of women was not specified. The federal census was not considered legal documentation of a woman's marital status and the term "housekeeper" was used for adult women in the occupation column.

When the term 'housekeeper' was applied and the surname matched that of the head of the household, she could be a wife, mother, daughter, niece, granddaughter, or a paid housekeeper. To determine whether the woman was married required access to public records or church records for marriage documentation. In the 1860 U. S. Census, a total of 884 persons were listed for Bodega Township, Smith's Ranch Post Office; by 1870 that figure rose to 1,415.

Lois Weeth later resided in Pacific Grove. She is a native Californian, a botanist, and was a Bodega Bay resident from 1981 to 2005. An avid historian, she served as secretary of RBHS. ■



## FROM THE ARCHIVES

### Remembering Lois Weeth whose life passion was the study of plants

Lois Margaret Weston Weeth died peacefully in her sleep at the age of 97 (1922-2019). She was a beloved mother, grandmother, great grandmother, aunt, great aunt and friend who lived a full life.



Born in Los Angeles, Lois was given the nickname “Spot” for her many freckles. By the age of four she already knew her life’s passion: the study of plants. She was supported by her creative and hardworking parents, Joseph and Carol Weston, and her two rambunctious brothers, Robert and Joe Jr.

Lois had a long-time connection with the University of California. When she was there, she was one of the few female students at UC Davis, earning her Bachelor of Science degree in Plant Pathology in 1943.

Her dedication to UC and her outgoing and practical nature led her to become president of the Cal Aggie Alumni Association, chair of the UC Davis Foundation, and ex-officio member of University of California Board of Regents. Later in life she continued her association with the University by being a docent at the UC Davis Arboretum and Bodega Marine Laboratory.

Lois met her husband-to-be, Harold Weeth, at UC Davis. They married in 1944 after he finished his studies and served in WWII. Eventually, she moved back to Davis, and then Bodega Bay following her divorce with her husband in 1980.

She continued to seek out adventures and new ways of connecting to the world. She spent many summers in the Sierras often accompanied by her great niece and nephew, Ariel and Alex. She led them on hikes and kayaking trips, cataloging the many plants that grew in the area. Rarely did Lois leave a place where she traveled without making lifelong friends and identifying the area’s local flora.

Lois’ resiliency never wavered. With a diagnosis of macular degeneration, she decided to move from her beautiful home in Bodega Bay to Pacific Grove, where she could be closer to her son Fritz and his wife Lola, and where supportive services would be more readily available. Continuing to explore California she discovered a type of oak tree not previously known in the Boonville area, which led to further research and collaboration with Dr. John Tucker, a world renown oak expert.

Lois was inquisitive, highly intelligent and eager to share her knowledge. She was outgoing and genuinely interested in the people that she met. Generous in spirit she was ready to listen and give good council. Up until the last few months of her life she was as sharp as ever, maintaining her interests in plants, the natural world, her family, and many, many friends. She will be greatly missed.

Lois is survived by brother Joseph Weston, son Fritz Weeth, grandsons Joe and Brent Weeth, great grandchildren Caitlyn and Ryan Weeth, nieces Caskey Weston, Suzanne Jellison, Ravenna Dirks, Jennifer Hanson, Melissa Andrezewjewski, and nephew Matthew Weston, and great nieces and nephews, Alex and Ariel Hirsch, Andy Weston, Sara Montero, Will Hanson, Lauren Malone, Julia Walsh, and Emily De Long. ■

<https://www.berkeleyside.org/2021/01/22/remembering-lois-weeth-whose-life-passion-was-the-study-of-plants>

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

### Rancho Bodega Settlers

by John Maestri - 2020

As a historian, I have always been fascinated with place names and the people who gave their names to these places. We are familiar with such names as Cheney Gulch, Doran Beach and the Coleman, Wright & Gleason Beaches.

In February 1875, James Smith, son of Captain Stephen Smith sued some 40 ranchers in Rancho Bodega to reclaim property sold by Tyler Curtis. In October 1875, the lawsuit was dismissed in the Sonoma County court, indicating that Tyler Curtis' sales to these ranchers was legal under the terms of the guardianship signed by Tyler and Manuela Torres Smith.

In June 1877, the case was appealed and went to the California Supreme Court, where the court upheld the earlier judgment made by the lower court. Judges of the California Supreme Court heard testimony from many parties, including James Smith, who attested that the sales were illegal and that the guardianship had been obtained without his permission.

The Supreme Court reviewed the original Mexican Land Grant of 1843 and the subsequent California affirmation of Captain Smith's land grant of 37,000 acres in Sonoma County, called Rancho Bodega. They reviewed the will of Captain Smith which gave his estate (and the land) to Manuela Torres and her children.

After Captain Smith died in 1855, Curtis obtained a guardianship of the three children of Captain Smith and Manuela Torres Smith (Stephen Smith, Manuelita Smith & James Smith). Tyler petitioned the Probate Court of California to allow him to sell their shares in the estate including the land of Rancho Bodega and it was granted based on his 1861 guardianship obtained after his marriage to Manuela Torres Smith.

The land owners and ranchers were the subject of the lawsuit. They had purchased their properties of between 150 and 500 acres beginning in 1861, and by the 1870s Tyler had sold all the lands of Rancho Bodega. Tyler Curtis and Manuela Torres Curtis moved to a mansion on Van Ness in San Francisco, where Manuela died in 1871. Needless to say, the Ranchers of Bodega Bay rejoiced in the Supreme Court ruling that allowed them to retain their ownership of the land. ■

The map on page 5 and the biographies of the ranchers listed here can be found on our web site: <http://ranchobodega.org/rancho.html>

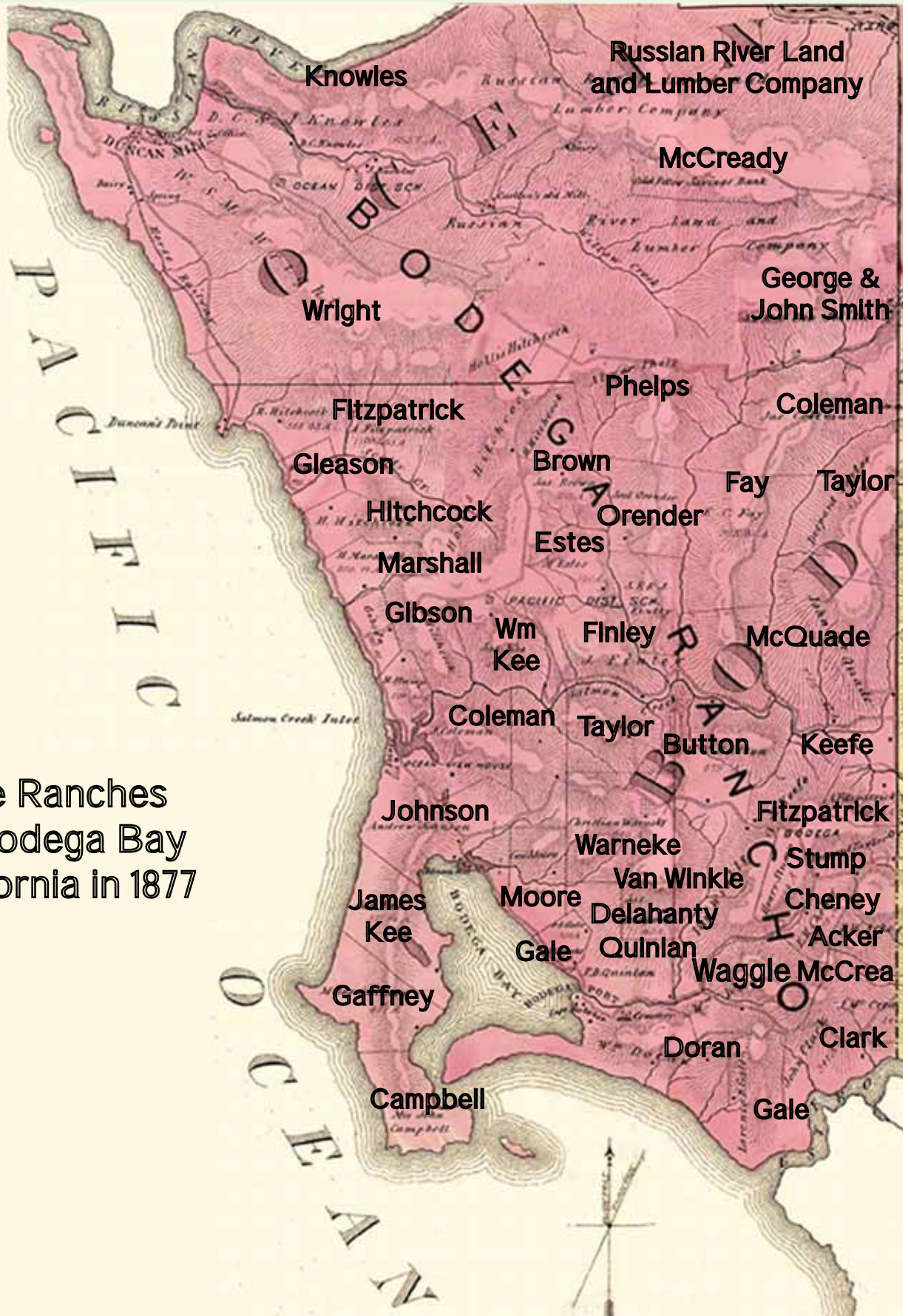
#### Ocean Township

- Joseph Knowles
- David Knowles
- Samuel McCready
- Russian River Land and Lumber Company
- George Washington Smith
- John Kinder Smith Sr.
- Winfield Wright

#### Bodega Township

- Reuben Wood Acker
- James Henry Brown
- Isaac Vail Button
- James 'John' Campbell
- Edmund Cheney
- John Nathan Clark
- James Coleman
- James Delehanty
- William Marion Doran
- Hickman Estes
- Enos Fay
- John Finley
- Andrew Fitzpatrick
- Miles Gaffney
- Lorenzo Dow Gale
- Otis Seldon Gale
- John Henry Gibson
- William Gleason
- Hollis Hitchcock
- Andrew Johnson
- Benjamin Joy
- James Kee
- Nathaniel Keefe
- Hugh Ancrum Marshall
- John McCrea
- John McQuade
- George Moore
- Joel Orender
- Almar Phelps
- Patrick Quinlan
- Henry Stump
- Despard Taylor
- Thomas Van Winkle
- William Waggle
- Christian Warneke

FROM THE ARCHIVES



The Ranches  
of Bodega Bay  
California in 1877

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

### The History of the Union Hotel in Occidental

*by Susan Teel - 2014*

The region now known as Occidental, CA, was settled in the 1840's, 50's and 60's by farmers, cattle ranchers and loggers. William "Dutch" Bill Howard, who settled there in 1849, became the first permanent resident.

In October of 1876, the North Pacific Railroad was completed in Occidental and the town began to build up around it. The railroad's main function was to haul away the local timber to distant markets, but it also served as a lifeline, bringing workers, tourists and adventurers to Occidental. The town with its elevation of 560 feet was the highest point on the railroad.



On May 10, 1879, Dutch Bill Howard sold one of his lots, number 6, to Amelia Jones. Her family built what was later to become Union Hotel on the site. They sold the site back to Howard the following year. In 1891, he sold the building to Giovanni Gobetti and his wife Giovanna. They converted it to the Union Saloon and operated it for almost 35 years.


In 1925, Giovanna sold the Union Saloon to Carlo Panizzera. He turned it into the Union Hotel, which is still owned and operated by his descendants today. Carlo, born in Italy in 1889, immigrated to California where he worked as a cowboy in the San Fernando Valley for several years. Carlo moved to Occidental to join a cousin who lived there. When he bought the Union Saloon, he ran it as a boarding house and restaurant for stopover passengers from the railroad. One morning, a waitress he had hired, Mary Alberigi, was carrying a load of linens from the hotel rooms upstairs down the steep, narrow stairway to the floor below when she tripped and fell. Carlo found her, picked her up, and carried her to the doctor. They were inseparable from that day on and married on December 7, 1929 which was the year the railroad stopped and the boarding house closed. Mary gave birth to their only child, Lucille, in 1930.

In the 1930's, Mary's good home cooking had become legendary, and people drove long distances for dinner. Soon, more space was needed and a new dining room was opened on December 7, 1941, which coincidentally was also Pearl Harbor Day.

Lucille, who grew up in the family business, married Dan "Mahoney" Gonnella on November 6, 1949. They had five children, Michael, Mary Theresa, Mark, Daniel and Frank. Carlo died in 1977, and Mary died two years later in a tragic car accident. Lucille, Mahoney and their children were left to run the growing family business. The next generation of the Gonnella's added an outdoor courtyard in 1984, the bakery/café in 1988 and the Pizzeria in 1992. A second restaurant was built in 1995, followed by a third in 2006, both in Santa Rosa, CA.

As you wander through the rooms at the Union Hotel, lifelike portraits of the young Carlo and Mary hang over the door of the saloon near the steps of the old fateful staircase where they fell in love. The Gonnella family desires one to leave the Union Hotel; feeling more like part of the family than a guest. ■

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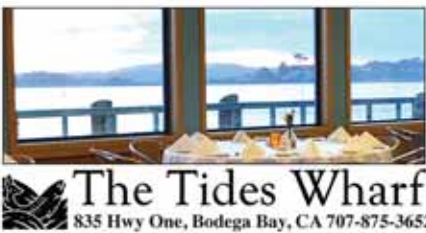


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**IN THIS ISSUE**

**Lois Weston Weeth (1922-2019)**



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continued her association with the University by being a docent at the Bodega Marine Laboratory. She was a Bodega Bay resident from 1981 to 2005. An avid historian, she served as secretary of RBHS.

**WINTER EVENTS**

**BODEGA BAY CHOWDER DAY** Saturday, January 27th. Chowder tasting begins at 10am and ends at 3pm. Please bring your printed ticket from Eventbrite to your designated check in location. Your check location can be found on your Eventbrite ticket. Check in locations will be at the Rocker Oysterfeller’s Restaurant, 14415 Highway One, Valley Ford CA 94972 and at the Sonoma Coast Visitors Center, 913 Highway 1, Bodega Bay CA 94923. Ticket fee is \$30.00 per person (plus a \$3.85 processing fee) Sales end on Jan 22, 2024. You will receive a wristband and a Commemorative Tasting Spoon and Map at check in. <https://www.eventbrite.com/>

**ANNUAL CRAB CIOPPINO** February 18th (Sunday of President’s Day weekend)The Bodega Bay Grange is accepting reservations for its Crab Cioppino Day. Pick a time (Noon, 1:30 pm, 3 00 pm or 4:30 pm). For 70 years this volunteer run event has served up all-you-can-eat fresh Dungeness crab cioppino, marinated cold crab, garlic bread, salad and dessert. It’s a secret recipe handed down over time that keeps folks coming back year after year. Same price as last year, \$80 per ticket (plus a \$7.21 processing fee). Corkage is \$10 (same as last year). We are now using Eventbrite for ticket sales: <https://www.eventbrite.com/>

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