GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY Newsletter

Volume 32 Issue 2

Groton, Vermont

05046

Spring 2019

AMERICANISM



Sleeping Sentinel Memorial

2018 OFFICERS

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One hundred years ago the American Legion initiated a program advance the concept Americanism at their first National 1919 Convention in held Minneapolis, MN. A review of the historical background for program in the February issue of The American Legion magazine by editor, Stoffer, provides understanding of the concept and why it is so important and became a pillar newly formed of the organization.

The Armistice ending World War I had been signed a year earlier and the veterans founding the organization remembered their concerns about the public understanding and appreciation of the American identity.

At the time only about half of American teenagers attended high school regularly. A large part of WWI troops were conscripted immigrants, some had barely begun to learn English as a second language, which caused communications breakdowns in the service. Most were under educated in U. S. Government, law and history. Few understood what the U. S. Flag represents or how

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American "justice, freedom, and democracy" compared to other nations. And to the disgust of those who marched off to the Great War in Europe, thousands of immigrants had used their foreign citizenship to avoid service, no matter how long they had lived in the U. S. Thus U. S. citizenship for immigrants became high priority.

There was also deep concern that the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia might spill over into the United States. Communist recruiters were already contacting young Americans, including troops still stationed in Europe after the armistice. Fascism and Nazism appeared later and recruited in the U. S. at a time before media or policy makers fully understood the intentions of Mussolini or Hitler. The veterans had fought hard to "make the world safe for democracy" and opposed all anti-democracy ideologies. To the veterans the best kind of "ism" was Americanism. Racism was denounced and any individual, group or organization that "creates or fosters racial, religious, or class strife among our people, or which takes into their own hands the enforcement of law, determination of guilt, or infliction of punishment, (was considered) to be un-American, a menace to our liberties, and destructive to our fundamental law."

The incident that solidified the promotion of Americanism was the Armistice Day Riot in Centralia, WA on November 11, 1919 during the American Legion Parade. Six people were killed, four Legionnaires and a deputy sheriff, followed by a mob lynching of one suspected killer, a member of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW called "Wobblies"). The IWW union was organizing the wood workers to oppose their employers and suspected of being influenced by the Bolshevik revolution, and the Post Commander, Warren Grimm the first causality, had given a speech earlier about "the evils of the Bolsheviks" from his experiences with the U. S. Army protecting the trans-Siberian Railway during the revolution. The massacre showed that the conflict between Americanism and other "isms" could turn deadly, so the Legion took a proactive approach to Americanism, forming a committee that later became a national commission to advance the concept through programs and services.

In 1920 citizenship and naturalization programs were started, followed the next year with an alliance with the National Education Association (NEA) to have education programs "which will make all, whether native or foreign born, good American citizens." The alliance led to National Education Week in 1926, and publication of the school textbook set, "The Story of Our People".

National Flag Conferences were held starting in 1923 and led to establishing the U. S. Flag Code in 1942, promoting flag respect and protection.

The Americanism Commission initiated a nationwide Community and Civic Betterment Bureau that brought hundreds of parks, pools, theaters, clinics, bands, sports programs and forums into existence.

American Legion school awards program based on honor, courage, scholarship, citizenship, and service was started in 1921 and continues today.

During the depression in the 1930's Americanism was expressed by feeding the unemployed and when disasters hit helping victims by providing security and assistance in rebuilding their lives and communities.

Youth programs were established with the philosophy that sports could do more than serve as amusement for the fans, it could be a matter of citizenship training. American Legion Boys State, starting in 1935 and later Girls State, was a direct response to the communistinspired Young Pioneer Camps attempting to lure U. S. youth. Boys State teaches young people how government functions in a successful democracy. Similarly, the Oratorical Contest, that awards scholarships annually, requires the competitors to study and know the Constitution to compete successfully in the contest.

Boy Scouts of America was the first organization, in 1919, that the Legion helped promote Americanism programs, including ceremonies to respectfully retire worn-out U. S. flags.

Richard Anderson, chairman of the Americanism Commission said, "... Americanism is an ideology that is continually nurtured within one's soul through individual daily actions, thoughts and beliefs in what their responsibilities are to be, blessed to live in one nation under God, with liberty and justice for all."

NOTE: The former Wendell E. Lord Post No. 8 of the American Legion established in October 1919 was named for Groton's only soldier killed in The Great War, later called World War I.

Sleeping on Duty

(conclusion)

Dennis A. Hermann

Private William Scott of Company K, 3rd Regiment Vermont Volunteer Infantry had been found guilty of "Sleeping on Duty" by Court Martial September 3, 1861. The sentence was "to be shot to death on Monday the 9th of September 1861."

The men of the 3rd Vermont were desperate to try to save Scott's life! Time was quickly running out.

The very night of the court martial, September 3rd, Brigadier General William F. Smith, Commanding, sent his brigade, which included the 3rd Vermont, charging from the Union Camp Lyon, north of the Potomac River, across Chain Bridge into Confederate Virginia.

The movement was a grand success, and the Union had an important foothold in the Confederacy and added protection for Washington.

Now fortifications had to be built for a camp (Camp Advance) and the soldiers. All the efforts of all the soldiers were concentrated in these essential tasks. The days quickly passed and fulfillment of Scott's sentence seemed to be inevitable.

The men of the 3rd Vermont gathered, when possible, to discuss a plea to stop Scott's execution. It was decided that a petition to spare William Scott's life was needed. This would take time getting signatures, and the petition had to go up the chain of command. Committees were set up, and signatures were quickly collected.

Captain Leonard Bennett of Company K and the regimental chaplain, Moses Parmellee, were two of the leading forces trying to save Scott.

Four pages of 3rd Vermont soldiers' signatures, approximately 200, were on the petition, including the regimental chaplain, eight company captains, many lieutenants, noncommissioned officers and numerous privates. Even Captain Thomas House, who found Scott sleeping on duty, signed the petition.

The petition reads:

"Camp Advance, Va. Sept 8, 1861

To Brig Genl. Smith

We, the undersigned Officers and privates of the Vermont 3rd Reg. would most respectfully and earnestly petition that the life of William Scott, private of Company K, now under sentence of death, may be spared."

On the first page of the petition is noted: "forwarded by Brig Genl W F Smith, Chas Mundu ajt."

"General Smith endorsed the petition, sent it Sunday, September 8, 1861, by a major to General McClellan's headquarters six miles away in Washington, the major stopping in at the White House to show it to the President." (*Abraham Lincoln: The War Years* Vol 3, Sandburg, Carl pg 530) General McClellan had reviewed Scott's case immediately after the court martial and approved the findings and confirmed the sentence.

Could this sincere effort by his regiment tendered the day before the execution date save Scott?

Scott had other forces working on his behalf.

While the petition was going through military channels, Anne Collins King's letter of September 8, 1861 went directly to President Lincoln.

Anne King was the wife of Horatio King, who served as Postmaster General of the United States under President Buchanan and for Lincoln from February 12 until March 7, 1861.

Her remarkable, eloquent and persuasive letter pleaded for Scott's life and his worth.

A third effort to save Scott's life was occurring at the same time

A group of officers and privates from the 3rd Vermont met with fellow Vermonter, Lucius E. Chittenden, Register of the Treasury and an attorney, at his office in Washington.

The Captain of the group (probably Bennett of Company K) passionately explained to Chittenden the circumstances of Scott's plight and their efforts to have his life spared. He explained that Scott was a good soldier, his record was good, they all were still raw recruits not yet hardened to military ways and of his lack of sleep helping a comrade. It also was the opinion of the group and Scott's fellow soldiers, that although falling asleep was wrong, it should not warrant death.

Chittenden immediately knew only President Lincoln could help. Following Chittenden, the group went to the White House and found themselves in Lincoln's presence.

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"What is this?" Lincoln asked. "An expedition to kidnap somebody, or to get another brigadier appointed, or for a furlough to go home to vote? I cannot do it, gentlemen. Brigadiers are thicker than drummajors, and I couldn't get a furlough for myself if I asked it from the War Department."

"Mr. President these men want nothing for themselves. They are Green Mountain boys of the Third Vermont, who have come to stay as long as you need good soldiers. They don't want promotion until they earn it. But they do want something that you alone can give them – the life of a comrade," Chittenden said. (Lincoln and the Sleeping Sentinel: The True Story Chittenden, L. E. pg. 27)

Realizing that Scott's life depended on him, the Captain told the complete story to President Lincoln factually, in vivid detail with high emotions. He told the President that Scott was no coward and he would fulfill his sworn duty.

After hearing the story, Lincoln said, "I do not think an honest, brave soldier, conscious of no crime but sleeping when he was weary, ought to be shot or hung. The country has better uses for him. Captain, your boy shall not be shot – that is, not tomorrow, nor until I know more about his case." (Lincoln and the Sleeping Sentinel: The True Story Chittenden, L. E. pg. 31)

The group hurried back to tell Scott he was not to be executed the next day!

Lincoln must have decided to pardon Scott that Sunday morning September 8, 1861. In a letter of the same date to his wife, General McClellan wrote, "Mr. Lincoln came this morning to ask me to pardon a man that I had ordered to be shot, suggesting that I could give as a reason in the order that it was by request of the 'Lady President' (Mary Lincoln)." (George B. McClellan's Own Story: the War for the Union: the Soldiers Who Fought It, the Civilians Who Directed It, and His Relations to It and Them McClellan, George B. Pgs 90 – 91)

Early the morning of Monday, September 9th the 3rd Regiment Vermont Volunteer Infantry was formed at Camp Advance.

From his place of confinement of eight days and eight nights of the torture of thinking about his death, Private William Scott marched into the beautiful morning sunlight and was positioned before his regiment, his comrades. How could he repay his comrades for all they had done for him? Scott knew he had a reprieve from execution, but for how long?

Asa Blunt, Adjutant 3rd Vermont Infantry, approached and read to Private William Scott and all present the charges and the court martial proceed-

ings. He folded the papers, put them in his coat and then pulled out and read the General Order No. 8 issued by Major General McClellan, Commanding, Army of the Potomac.

Headquarters of the Army of the Potomac

Washington, September 8.

Private William Scott, of Company K, of the Third regiment of Vermont volunteers, having been found guilty by court martial of sleeping on his post while a sentinel on picket duty, has been sentenced to be shot, and the sentence has been approved and ordered to be executed. The commanding officers of the brigade, the regiment and the company, of the command, together with many other privates and officers of his regiment, have earnestly appealed to the Major-General commanding. to spare the life of the offender, and the President of the United States has expressed a wish that as this is the first condemnation to death in this army for this crime, mercy may be extended to the criminal. fact, viewed in connection with the inexperience of the condemned as a soldier, his previous good conduct and general good character, and the urgent entreaties made in his behalf, have determined the Major-General commanding to grant the pardon so earnestly prayed for. This act of clemency must not be understood as affording a precedent for any future case. The duty of a sentinel is of such a nature, that its neglect by sleeping upon or deserting his post may endanger the safety of a command, or even of the whole army, and all nations affix to the offence the penalty of death. Private William Scott of Co. K, of the Third regiment of Vermont volunteers, will be released from confinement and returned to duty. Maj. Gen. McClellan

> By command of Maj-General McClellan S. Williams, Asst. Adjt.-General

A thousand cheers thundered and echoed throughout Camp Advance! Although by the order, General McClellan issued the pardon and President Lincoln only expressed a wish for mercy, the soldiers knew the pardon came from President Lincoln. Cheers for President Lincoln were raised again and again!

The news of the pardon was leaked and the Washington newspapers' editions were coming out with the details at the same time the Order was being read to Scott.

From the 9th day of September 1861, Private William Scott Company K, 3rd Regiment Vermont Volunteer Infantry became known and immortalized as the: **Sleeping Sentinel.**

GROTON FAMILIES



Sarah (Lawton) and Roger Eastman Family 1960

Standing L to R: Carrie (1912-1992), Howard (1922-1983), Clifford (1925-2009), Dorothy (1918-1990), Katherine (1935-), Sarah (1888-1966), Tom (1910-1975), Larry (1920-2004), Bart (1907-1992), Vernold (1930-2003), Kneeling: Kenneth (1914-2008), and Robert (1932-2012). Deceased members: Roger (1886-1954) and Sarah (1923-1924).





Josiah and Lucinda (Gates) Keenan Family before 1900

Front Grandchildren L to R: Marinda Pearl Keenan (1888-1968), Ida Larrow (1891-1921), Morris Ray Keenan (1890-1971), and Frank Lyle Keenan (1886-1941). Second row: Margaret (1860-?), Lucinda (1830-1902), Josiah (1826-1907), Fred Larrow (1862-?), Third row: Benjamin Fuller (1849-1926), Ida (1855-1911), Lovina (Dunn) (1858-1947), Francis (1853-1906). Fourth Row: Charles (1866-1954), Olive (Burr), Sarah (Baylor), Morris (1857-1892)., ?

Please report any mistaken identities to GHS for corrections.

Opposite page—Rolla Barnes family: picture about 1933: Alton, Clifford, Arlene, Rolla, George, Marie, Myra holding Shirley and Ivis.

HENRY WELLS 1805-1878

Henry Wells was born in Thetford, Orange Co., VT on December 12, 1805 to Dorothea "Dorothy" (Randall) (1772-1850) and Shipley Wells (1777-1832), a Presbyterian Minister. His immigrant ancestor was Thomas Welles (1590-1659), who came to Massachusetts in 1635. Henry married Sarah Caroline Daggett (1803-1859) on September 5, 1827 and they had four children: Charles, Mary Elizabeth, Oscar A., and Edward. After his first wife's death on October 13, 1859 in Albany, New York, he married Mary Prentice of Boston in 1861.

Henry spent his first eight years in Vermont before his family joined the westward movement of New Englanders and settled in New York. After working on farms in his youth and apprenticed with a tanning and shoemaking firm Jessup & Palmer in 1822, he worked as a shipping clerk on the Erie Canal in 1836 which exposed him to the opportunities in shipping.

Wells went to work in the offices of the Hamden Express Company, based in Albany, New York. The company was one of the earliest businesses in express shipping. Hamden had realized businesses needed a faster, reliable way to transport goods and money from city to city. At the time, goods were transported on ships or barges, by stagecoach and horseback. Delivery often took many days or weeks. With the arrival of railway travel, companies like Hamden Express guaranteed delivery of goods quickly, and business was soon flourishing.

Young Wells understood the potential of express shipping, and believed Hamden should expand to other cities and states on the East Coast. Harden was reluctant, so Wells left the company and started his own delivery firm running from Albany to Buffalo, New York. He formed a partnership called Wells & Company, which delivered, trunks filled with small valuables, letters, and funds between the two cities. These messenger services offered a secure form of express shipping. Packages and papers were delivered within a certain time for an agreed-upon price, and a person employed by the firm accompanied the shipments at all times.

While working at his messenger service, Wells met another likeminded young man named William G. Fargo. The two soon began an express partnership of their own that ran between New York and Michigan. Similar shipping businesses started all over the East Coast and the competition soon became fierce. To survive and thrive, Wells and Fargo combined their operations with several rival businesses in 1850 and formed the American Express Company. Wells was elected president, and served in that position the next eighteen years.

Wells and Fargo had high hopes for American Express, and wanted to expand from the East Coast to the West Coast. Gold had been discovered in California and thousands went west to seek their fortunes. The other partners in American Express did not want to expand westward, and certainly not all the way to California. California, which had just been purchased by the United States from Mexico (along with New Mexico and Texas in 1848), seemed foreign and very far away to most New Yorkers. Wells and Fargo, however, were not deterred; instead they raised money for a new venture that would offer services for gold miners and businessmen out West.

In 1852, with \$300,000 in financial backing, they created Wells, Fargo & Company to provide express services tor western cities. The company was based in New York and Edwin B. Morgan served as the first president. Within a few months, offices opened in San Francisco and Sacramento, California. The firm bought and sold gold dust and offered banking and express shipping services. Wells decided to travel to California himself in 1853; about six months after the new company began services. He was pleased that Wells, Fargo & Company had become an excellent business venture.

By the 1860s, Wells had become a well-known and very successful businessman. Both of his companies, American Express and Wells, Fargo & Company, thrived. Wells continually looked for ways to make shipping and communication faster and more reliable. Through his efforts, the first telegraph lines were built in the United States. Wells was also generous with his wealth, donating large sums to various charities and educational causes.

Henry Wells gave generously to education. In 1868, he founded Wells Seminary (later Wells College) in Aurora, New York with an endowment to make it one of the first women's colleges in the United States. He also established schools in several cities that were dedicated to helping people who stammered, a physical condition that he, himself, suffered.

Wells retired as president of American Express in 1868 yet remained active in business and community affairs. He also traveled extensively. While visiting Glasgow, Scotland in 1878, Henry Wells died on December 10, two days shy of his seventy-third birthday.

Sources: Encyclopedia.com; Wikipedia.org

TOWNS NAMED GROTON

The Massachusetts Groton History Center gets calls inquiring for information about Groton, however, it's not always their Groton. There are six other towns in the United States named Groton. How did these other towns get their names – and are they connected to Groton, Massachusetts?

First, how did Groton, Massachusetts get its name? On May 23, 1655, the petition for Groton Plantation was granted by the General Court in Boston. The first named petitioner and selectman, Dean Winthrop, named the town "Groton" after his birthplace in Groton, Suffolk, England. The Winthrop family was also involved in the founding of Boston and John Winthrop was one of the first Governors of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

In 1705, Groton, Connecticut was established after its separation from New London. The town was also named after Groton, Suffolk, England by John Winthrop (Gov. John Winthrop's son).

Groton, New Hampshire was first known as Cockermouth in honor of Charles Wyndham, Baron Cockermouth and Earl of Egremont, who was Great Britain's Secretary of State from 1761 to 1762. Due to non-settlement, the land was re-granted a number of times. Eventually in 1796, one of the later grantees, Samuel Blood, renamed the town after his hometown, Groton, Massachusetts.

Groton, Vermont was granted to Thomas Butterfield, et. al. in 1789 and the 1790 census had only 45 people. It is also believed to be named after Groton, Massachusetts, but some argue, however, that it is in fact named after Groton, Connecticut.

Groton, South Dakota was also named after Groton, Massachusetts, but for an entirely different reason! The town was registered in 1881 and laid between the tracks of Chicago, Milwaukee and the St. Paul Railroad. The town was named after Groton, Massachusetts as it was familiar to railroad officials.

Groton, New York is also believed to be named after Groton, Massachusetts. But others, believe it was named by settlers from Groton, Connecticut.

Groton, Ohio in Erie County was first settled in 1809 but not organized until 1834 and how it got it's name is unclear. It was first called "Wheatsborough" after a man ("Mr. Wheat") who owned much of it, but sometime in the 19th century it was renamed Groton. It is unclear if there is a connection to any of the other Groton towns.

MAN ON THE MOON – FIFTY YEARS AGO

Fifty years ago on July 20, 1969 Neal Armstrong was the first man to walk on the Moon, And 20 minutes later Buzz Aldrin followed him. Armstrong's famous quote: "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." was televised live from the moon and heard by about 530 million people, one fifth of the world's population, President Nixon congratulated the crew by telephone. Their return flight to the moon orbiter, piloted by Michael Collins, and safe return to earth by all three accomplished President Kennedy's challenge to the Congress on May 25, 1961: "I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the Earth."

In 1945 after World War II the "Cold War" between the Soviet Union and the United States was heating up. On October 4, 1957, the Soviet Union launched Sputnik 1, the first man-made satellite. This surprise success caused fears and imaginations around the world. The Russians had demonstrated a possibility to deliver nuclear weapons anywhere in the world, and challenged American claims of superiority. The Sputnik crisis started the Space Race. President Eisenhower responded with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and initiating Project Mercury, to launch a man into Earth orbit. But on April 12, 1961, Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first person in space, and the first to orbit the Earth. It was another blow to American pride. Nearly a month later, on May 5, 1961, Alan Shepard became the first American in space, completing a 15-minute suborbital journey. After being recovered from the Atlantic Ocean, he received a congratulatory telephone call from Eisenhower's successor, President Kennedy.

Project Apollo, to land a man on the moon, had a serious set back on January 27, 1967 when Apollo I caught fire on the launching pad and three astronauts died. But in October 1968 Apollo 7 successfully tested the spacecraft in earth orbit, and in December that year Apollo 8 tested it in lunar orbit. Apollo 9 and 10 conducted "dress rehearsals" before Apollo 11 successfully completed the mission July 16 to 24, 1969. Although the Apollo Program continued for several more launches ending in 1972, and 10 more astronauts walked on the moon completing research projects, the challenge to land a human on the moon had been reached and interest in the Space Program began to wane.

I remember watching the landing on the moon and Neal Armstrong's first steps. I was a counselor at Boy Scout Camp Wichinigen in Minnesota that week with my three sons, Jack, Dan and Mark. The Boy Scouts had gathered for their weekly bonfire and the staff had gathered enough extension cords to connect a TV to the camp office several hundred feet away, Everyone was able to experience this monumental event before celebrating with a very huge bonfire.

GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Visit GHS on the internet

Email: grotonvthistory@gmail.com
Web page: grotonvthistory.org
Facebook@grotonvthistory

GROTON FIRE DESTROYS SMITH'S STORE AND SHELL GARAGE

February 1. 1950 at 4 a.m. Emma Smith's property which was being used as a Shell gas station operated by George Carpenter and the (adjacent) Smith grocery store and Snack Shop were destroyed.by fire. There were three apartments above the store. Occupants were Dwight (Buster) and Margaret (Henderson) Smith and (their) two children (Stuart 7 and Gerald 3); Glenn and Jean (Smith) Gadwah. (The blaze was) discovered by (Mrs.) Harry Morrison, who notified Mrs. Minnie Freer, manager of the local telephone exchange (next door). Harold (should be Carrol) Ricker was chief of the Groton fire department (which was able to save the adjacent buildings). The building (Smith's Store and Snack Shop) was originally constructed (in the early 1800's) as a home for William Dow. In recent years it had been known as the Pillsbury house. Prior to being the Smiths, it had been used as a hardware store conducted by Wilson Pillsbury. (It was also used in the 1930's and early 40;s as a Meeting House for the "Holy Rollers", an Evangelical Christian group led by Irving Moulton.) Note: This information was taken from the Caledonia Record dated 2/1/1950 with parenthetical additions and corrections by the editor.

The study and collection of postcards is called deltiology. The first American postcard was developed in 1873 by the Morgan Envelope Factory of Springfield, MA. The Post Master distributed pre-stamped "postal cards" - called "penny postcards." Postcards were popular as they offered a low cost and easier way of exchanging brief notes, The first "souvenir" postcard was created in 1893 to advertise the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Up until 1898 the Post Office held a monopoly on the printing and distribution of all postcards. The Private Mailing Card Act of 1898 allowed private publishers and printers to distribute postcards, as well. The government, however, decided that the term "postcard" should be reserved strictly for cards distributed by the Post Office - private publishers must call them "souvenir cards." This rule was changed in 1901; all cards were then "postcards."

The Groton VT Historical Society has a collection of vintage post-cards! Stop by and check them out. Meantime, enjoy the Groton postcards, digitized by Dick Kreis, on our web page at: www.grotonvthistory.org

NOTICE GHS CHANGE OF VENUE

Reunion of Groton High School students will be held at the Happy Hour Restaurant, in Wells River, VT starting at noon until 5 pm on June 29, 2019. Send your reservation with \$17 payable to **GROTON COMMUNITY CLUB** and mail to: Peter Lyon, 848 West Shore Drive, Groton VT 05046.

For more information call Peter Lyon at (802) 584 3020

The Groton High School Yearbooks that were displayed at the 2016 Reunion seem to have disappeared. If anyone knows where they are please notify Deborah Jurist by email at grotonvthistory@gmail.com Any help in locating this valuable collection of Groton High School Yearbooks will be appreciated.

2019 Groton Historical Society Calendars featuring pictures of items on display at the Peter Paul House was a successful fundraising project last December. There are a few calendars left for sale if anyone failed to get one earlier.

Books for sale by GHS include Mr. Glover's Groton, Civil War Recollections by Dr. Seth Eastman, and Childhood Stories by Waldo Glover.

A get together in April will get the year started planning programs and events for the summer and fall at the Peter Paul House.

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