

Preface



Katherine Crawford-Lackey

Preservation and Place: Historic Preservation by and of LGBTQ Communities in the United States was born out of a previous publication, *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History*, edited by Megan E. Springate for the National Park Foundation and the National Park Service (2016). The theme study, only available online, covers a range of topics and issues related to two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) history. This volume contains several revised and updated chapters from the theme study, as well as one new addition by Ty Ginter. The chapters in this volume were selected for their focus on topics relating to the historic preservation of LGBTQ historic sites, histories, and communities.

This volume includes activities not published in the theme study. Intended for advanced college undergraduate and graduate students, these were designed to allow educators the flexibility to adapt them to course curriculum. These materials can also be used by community leaders and activists seeking to engage with LGBTQ history and to undertake their own preservation projects. Designed specifically with the topic of preservation in mind, the activities offer opportunities to practically apply the book's content in the classroom and in communities.

Preservation and Place explores both the tangible and intangible aspects of place-making through the processes of preservation and interpretation. This volume (and the series as a whole) provides a unique focus on the historic sites affiliated with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer Americans, which afforded opportunities to gather, socialize, protest, mourn, and celebrate. The content discussed in the following pages reveals the power of place in shaping individual identities, in forming relationships, and in engaging with a broader community of citizens. Not only are sites associated with queer communities important for contemporary self-expression and collective bonding, they are also essential forms of documentation in that they speak to

how LGBTQ Americans have historically created nonheteronormative spaces. Preserving and studying the built environment, by extension, can provide information about how queer people moved through and interacted with the world.¹

American history, broadly taught in our public and private institutions, is too often decentered from the physical geography, displacing historical people and events from context. This form of historical amnesia makes these histories, particularly those of marginalized communities, vulnerable to those who would hijack these narratives for their own gain, a practice that has been normalized in contemporary political discourse. In addition, urban renewal has progressed at an alarming rate since the mid-twentieth century, leading to the destruction of countless historical places, particularly those of nonheteronormative Americans. Recording these properties is imperative in preserving the stories of queer Americans and revealing their significance within the broader framework of American history. Preserving historic properties facilitates the interpretation and commemoration of significant events, people, and communities in American history, embedding them in collective memory. The recognition of historically significant places is particularly important to underrepresented identities who too often remain voiceless in the historic record.

The silencing of certain perspectives from the historical narrative is an ongoing (and often intentional) process. Haitian anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot examined the process of historical production, identifying how and why certain histories are selected for collective remembrance over others. His book *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* interpreted the creation and preservation of historical records as a form of power as they inevitably result in the erasure of voices, leaving contemporary scholars with a limited glimpse of the past. These silences can occur when primary sources are created, when these sources are archived, during the research process, and in “the making of history” when information is disseminated.² The ability to study the past—through the recording of events, the management of the primary sources, the retrieval of sources, and the creation of interpretation based on the sources—implies a certain authority. Those who control the means of historical production control the past, and those who have the power to access the historic records (whether in the form of documents, oral stories, material culture, or the built environment) choose the history that is made available to the public through historic scholarship, interpretive programs, and preserved structures and sites.³ Historic places are also primary sources that can be used to interpret

certain stories while silencing others. In the words of Trouillot, historians “imagine the lives under the mortar, but how do [they] recognize the end of a bottomless silence?”⁴ Along this line of inquiry, practitioners should consider the exclusionary aspects of historic preservation and how the stories of underrepresented communities can more fully be recognized through this process.

One of the challenges in recognizing the spaces of LGBTQ Americans entails how to document and preserve these sites in a way that warrants their survival for the next generation. As human geographers Kath Browne and Gavin Brown note, even if not acknowledged, gender and sexuality influence the geography of the landscape and how space is constructed and mapped. The built environment has historically been laid out to reinforce hierarchies of power by creating gendered spaces that are based on the assumption that heterosexuality is “normal.” The relationships of power inherent in both public and private spaces was (and continues to be) used to legitimize the history and heritage of the privileged.⁵

Despite the power of historical spaces in shaping our collective consciousness, Americans have not always valued preservation as a means to study the past. When the historic preservation movement did take root in the early to mid-nineteenth century, it was generally concerned with preserving the history of white, heterosexual, cisgender men of privilege. Notable for its grassroots origin, the movement was galvanized by middle- and upper-class white women’s organizations that recognized the intrinsic value of historic structures. Viewed as “guardians of the society’s culture and morals,” women such as Ann Pamela Cunningham played a prominent role in safeguarding the history of the young nation by restoring and preserving the historic homes of great American figures.⁶ Cunningham founded the Mount Vernon Ladies Association (MVLA) and led efforts to restore and preserve George Washington’s homestead in northern Virginia.⁷ The establishment of the MVLA inspired other women’s organizations, including the Ladies Hermitage Association, responsible for the preservation of Andrew Jackson’s Hermitage near Nashville, Tennessee.⁸ While the movement was empowering to affluent white women who wanted to preserve (and control) the narrative of the American past, the early preservation movement is problematic as it excluded people of color from participating, and it ignored the places of those who did not fit within the definition of “respectable” citizens.⁹

Private efforts to save America’s (white) historic sites continued into the twentieth century with the establishment of Henry Ford’s Green-

field Village and the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg by John D. Rockefeller.¹⁰ While these examples of private rehabilitation speak to the direction of the movement, they were rooted in a colonial mentality that portrayed the lifestyles of upper-class society while ignoring the oppression of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America in regard to gender, race, sexuality, and class. At this time, the federal government also began to take a more active role in the preservation of America's natural and cultural sites. The National Park Service (NPS) was established in 1916 to protect America's natural landscapes.¹¹ At its founding, the NPS was "primarily focused on nature and scenery";¹² however, its role began to expand in the 1930s when it assumed responsibility for over sixty historic sites and monuments.¹³ When the United States government became further entrenched in the preservation movement in the 1930s, due in part to the Great Depression, it used the themes of natural and cultural conservation to encourage a sense of patriotism and camaraderie among its citizens, leading to an increased appreciation of the nation's history. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt also became wary of the effects of industrialization and modernization on historic structures.¹⁴ In response, the federal government passed the Historic Sites Act of 1935, which designated policies to preserve historic places for the public.¹⁵

In the decades that followed, the federal government's involvement in the preservation of historic sites continued to expand. According to National Park Service historian John H. Sprinkle Jr., "From 1935 through 1966, the National Park Service adopted criteria to identify and classify nationally significant sites with an eye towards acquisition, management, and interpretation."¹⁶ As America continued to urbanize and expand in the second half of the twentieth century, the government passed the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. A milestone for the preservation movement, this act established the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), created State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs),¹⁷ and set a standard for assessing potential outcomes when developing federal land or using federal funds in development under Section 106.¹⁸ The creation of the National Register, with its broader recognition of historically significant sites, freed the National Park Service from having to review countless park proposals.¹⁹ Today, the NRHP continues to aid the NPS, functioning as a "national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources."²⁰

As "the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation," the National Register of Historic Places recognizes historic

and archaeological sites with local, state, and national importance.²¹ In contrast, National Historical Landmarks (NHL) recognize places of exceptional national significance, emphasizing “a common bond between all Americans.”²² Properties listed on the National Register as well as those designated as National Historic Landmarks are not necessarily owned or cared for by the National Park Service (even though the NPS manages the NRHP and NHL programs). A historic site’s inclusion in one or more of these programs, however, signifies its importance in the broader story of American history. Federally recognizing a site’s historical significance is one way to legitimize its role and contribution in American history. Such designations are also important to the communities they represent. A site can possess historical significance and not be listed on the National Register; however, this program provides certain benefits for property owners. In addition to tax benefits, property owners can also apply for select grants.²³ The National Park Service also uses the history of these places in its official interpretation, which brings greater public awareness about the importance of the properties.

The National Register guidelines, however, can be limiting and exclusionary and have in the past favored the histories of wealthy, white, heterosexual American men.²⁴ A number of factors, including a lack of financial capital, discriminatory zoning laws and practices, and an increased likelihood of transiency, often cause the spaces associated with those with marginalized identities to go unrecognized. The National Register criteria does not take into account the added challenges when considering the places of minority communities, and this should cause professionals to reevaluate how “historical significance” is determined.²⁵

The authors of this book series frequently refer to queer places listed on the National Register and emphasize the need to have LGBTQ historic sites federally designated as National Historic Landmarks. Both programs are managed by the National Park Service, and, as this book series originally began as an online publication for the NPS, there is a notable emphasis on using the National Register and National Historic Landmark programs to recognize and preserve queer spaces. Despite this volume’s emphasis on NRHP listings and NHL designations, there are many other ways to recognize historically significant properties. In December 2017, the Metro Nashville Historical Commission recognized the significance of a local lesbian activist named Penny Campbell, adding a marker at her former home to the city’s Historic Marker Program. A local LGBT activist who was instrumental in organizing the city’s first pride parade, Campbell is also remembered as the lead plaintiff in a court case challenging the state’s “homosexual acts” statute. Due to the

efforts of Dr. Pippa Holloway, a professor of history at Middle Tennessee State University, and Jessica Reeves, a member of the Metro Historical Commission, the city of Nashville dedicated its first marker to a queer rights activist. The commemoration of the Campbell house by the Metro Historical Commission serves as an example of the importance of local and regional designation programs in preserving the history of sexually variant and gender nonconforming Americans.²⁶

Other avenues of preservation include greater stakeholder participation and community involvement. Practitioners such as urban historian Andrew Hurley have called for a more flexible approach to historic preservation policy. While Hurley acknowledges positive aspects of the National Historic Preservation Act, and specifically historic district designation, he notes the nature of private investment in architecturally significant buildings creates “minimal yields on the nation’s poorest quarters.”²⁷ A more holistic approach to preservation is needed in order to ensure that preservation efforts are beneficial to all. Historic properties can also be used as educational tools and perhaps even more so as beacons of empowerment and inspiration. It is through federal and grassroots cooperation that we as citizens can work together to be educators of our youth, leaders in our communities, and advocates for the irreplaceable sites that are a testament to our history as a complex yet united America. One way to achieve this is to foster a stronger relationship between professionals and the public, which is what we attempted to accomplish with this book series.

Shared authority between practitioners and members of the community allows for a more authentic and sustainable preservation model. But studying and preserving LGBTQ history and spaces requires an understanding of the language used when referring to queer individuals and communities. Today, sexually nonconforming and gender-variant people are often labeled as belonging to LGBTQ communities. While people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer are often referred to as a collective, lived experiences are inherently different depending on categories of difference (such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and religion). Knowing who identifies as part of these communities is necessary when studying the construction of queer identity. Lesbian and gay Americans are defined by an attraction to the same gender. While “lesbian” refers to women, the term “gay” often refers to men, but can be used when speaking of multiple genders. Bisexuals have “the capacity to be attracted to and love more than one gender.”²⁸ The term transgender refers to “the ways people can live lives that depart from the conventional patterns according to which all bod-

ies are assigned a sex at birth (male or female) and enrolled in a social gender (girl or boy)."²⁹

Many have debated the use of the term “queer” when referring to nonheteronormative people and behavior. Originally used as a derogatory term beginning in the late nineteenth century, the word queer has recently been reclaimed by a younger generation of Americans. This term is now used to refer to those of us who do not identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender but who are also not exclusively heterosexual. The use of the term today recognizes that there are many identities within lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities. In the spirit of inclusivity, this book series uses the term when referring broadly to nonheteronormative Americans in the past and present.³⁰

Over the past several years, the National Park Service has played a leading role in raising greater awareness to historic sites affiliated with LGBTQ history. As America’s storyteller, the National Park Service is responsible for identifying, preserving, and interpreting the history of all U.S. citizens. Recently, the NPS and its programs, such as the National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks Program, have begun to care for and interpret more diverse historic sites that represent the broader spectrum of American experiences. The NPS is, by extension, addressing the underrepresentation of certain communities, including Latinos/Latinas, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, women, and LGBTQ communities.³¹ *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History*, released by the National Park Foundation and the National Park Service in 2016, is a prime example of the growing diversity represented within the National Park Service. Over twelve hundred pages in length and with contributions from dozens of authors, the study is intended to help historians, preservationists, and members of the public identify potential properties for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places and as National Historic Landmarks. The listings, designations, and amendments to existing listings resulting from the LGBTQ theme study further demonstrate the significance of LGBTQ sites to the overall American story.³²

At the time the NPS released *LGBTQ America*, the impetus for this book series, I was a public history Ph.D. student completing my residency with the National Park Service’s Cultural Resources Office of Interpretation and Education. Editor Megan E. Springate and I were invited by Berghahn Books to propose a publication based on *LGBTQ America*. As editor of the theme study, Megan’s familiarity with the topic material and her working relationships with the authors were instrumental when conceptualizing and executing the series. To make the material more

accessible to young professionals, community leaders, and members of the public, we created a series of activities for the practical application of topics and theories discussed in the chapters. With a background in civic engagement and public interpretation, I took on the challenge of creating activities to complement the content, with the target audience being college undergraduate and graduate students in fields relating to LGBTQ history, public history, and historic preservation. This project was meaningful not only as a way to guide people in the field; I was also grappling with how to identify myself as someone attracted to multiple genders. Accordingly, the project took on a special significance to me, and I was excited to have the opportunity to make the content accessible to a broader readership in a way that was deeply personal.

Megan and I were also eager to make the chapters of the LGBTQ theme study available in print (as the original is only accessible online) and to disseminate this information widely to a new generation of scholars. As we attempted to identify sections of the theme study to include in the book, we began to recognize the centrality of all the chapters in depicting the LGBTQ experience in America. In *LGBTQ America*, the contributing authors addressed unique facets of queer communities and imparted how affiliated historic sites are interconnected with the larger historical narrative. As a result, our proposal to Berghahn Books was expanded to include a series of three volumes encompassing the themes of identity, community, and historic preservation.

The book series takes an all-encompassing approach to the study of queer history and culture. Due to their backgrounds as historians, public historians, preservationists, and community leaders, each author brings a different voice to the table. The series is also unique as it offers an interactive element designed to engage undergraduate and graduate students. Each chapter is accompanied by worksheets and activities to prompt readers to think critically and immerse themselves in the subject matter. Designed with the belief that learning should be an interactive process that inspires continued quest for knowledge, the activities were created to spark the imagination and reveal larger connections between LGBTQ history and American history. Intended to be read as a series or individually, the books examine the history of LGBTQ communities in the United States, explore the complexities of LGBTQ identities, and provide guidance on how to identify, preserve, and interpret affiliated properties.

Katherine Crawford-Lackey is a Ph.D. candidate in public history at Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

Notes

1. Scholars such as architectural historian Dell Upton and American studies professor Bernard L. Herman examine the intentionality of the built landscape in influencing human behavior and perceptions. Their work reveals how landscapes and structures are designed to reinforce hierarchies of power. For more information about the topic, see Dell Upton, "White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," in *Material Life in America 1600–1860*, edited by R. B. S. George (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988); and Bernard L. Herman, "The Embedded Landscapes of the Charleston Single House, 1780–1820," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 7 (1997): 41–57.
2. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 24.
3. *Ibid.*, 26.
4. *Ibid.*, 30.
5. Kath Browne and Gavin Brown, "An Introduction to the Geographies of Sex and Sexualities," in *The Routledge Research Companion to Geographies of Sex and Sexuality*, edited by Gavin Brown and Kath Browne (New York: Routledge, 2016); Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995).
6. Barbara Howe, "Women in Historic Preservation: The Legacy of Ann Pamela Cunningham," *Public Historian*, 12, no. 1 (1990): 31–61, 32.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Virginia O. Benson and Richard Klein, *Historic Preservation for Professionals* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2008), 13.
9. The early preservation movement originated from the concept of the "cult of domesticity" where middle- and upper-class white women, beacons of morality, were expected to uphold and pass on American values and traditions. Preserving the great places that embodied the best of the American experience, these women shaped the early history of the nation. Historian Barbara J. Howe elaborates on the role of women in the historic preservation movement in her chapter "Women in the Nineteenth-Century Preservation Movement," in *Restoring Women's History through Historic Preservation*, ed. Gail Lee Dubrow and Jennifer B. Goodman (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); but Fath Davis Ruffins reminds us that the role of women in the movement was limited to the elite. Speaking in reference to the historic sites featured by the National Park Service at the end of the twentieth century, Davis Ruffins notes that there are "rare examples in which the memory of Black women is present 'on the ground,' that is, on the national landscape of historic preservation." Fath Davis Ruffins, "Four African American Women on the National Landscape," in *Restoring Women's History through Historic Preservation*, ed. Dubrow and Goodman (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 59.

10. For more information on the preservation endeavors of John D. Rockefeller and Henry Ford, see Michael Wallace, "Visiting the Past: History Museums in the United States," in *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public*, ed. Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier, and Roy Rosenzweig (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 137–61; Steven Conn, "Objects and American History: The Museums of Henry Mercer and Henry Ford," in *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876–1926* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 151–92.
11. Norman Tyler, Ted J. Ligibel, and Ilene R. Tyler, *Historic Preservation: An Introduction to Its History, Principles, and Practice* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009), 30.
12. Anne Mitchell Whisnant, Marla R. Miller, Gary B. Nash, and David Thelen, *Imperiled Promise: The State of History in the National Park Service* (Bloomington, IN: Organization of American Historians, 2011), 20.
13. John H. Sprinkle Jr., *Crafting Preservation Criteria: The National Register of Historic Places and American Historic Preservation* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 7.
14. *Ibid.*, 9–10.
15. Tyler, Ligibel, and Tyler, *Historic Preservation*, 61.
16. Sprinkle, *Crafting Preservation Criteria*, 2.
17. In 1992, the National Historic Preservation Act was amended, and tribal governments were permitted to establish Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) programs. Operating on tribal land, THPOs provide similar services as the State Historic Preservation Officers. NATHPO, "THPO Funding," National Association of Tribal Historical Preservation Offices website, accessed 1 January 2018, <http://nathpo.org/wp/thpos/history-of-funding/>.
18. Department of the Interior, *Federal Historic Preservation Laws: The Office of Compilation of U.S. Cultural Heritage Statutes* (Washington, DC: Department of the Interior, 2006), 60.
19. Sprinkle, *Crafting Preservation Criteria*, 17.
20. "National Register of Historic Places," website homepage, National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/nr/>.
21. *National Register of Historic Places*, Brochure/poster, National Park Service, https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/NR_Brochure_Poster/NR_Brochure_Poster.pdf.
22. Tyler, Ligibel, and Tyler, *Historic Preservation*, 150.
23. Sprinkle, *Crafting Preservation Criteria*, 1–4.
24. In the past, the National Register and National Historic Landmarks programs placed an emphasis on architecturally significant structures, and resulting nominations often ignored the human stories of those who lived and worked in these buildings. Additional challenges in nominating LGBTQ-affiliated properties arise when considering physical integrity. Current NPS bureau historian John H. Sprinkle Jr. gives an overview of requirements for listing properties to these programs in his book *Crafting Preservation Crite-*

- ria, and he acknowledges that properties often lose integrity over time, especially those in urban areas. The National Register's "50 Year Rule" further complicates LGBTQ-affiliated nominations as the period of significance for many of the properties associated with queer history is relatively recent. Sprinkle, *Crafting Preservation Criteria*.
25. Critics of the National Register have cautioned against its arguably narrow interpretation of the concept of "historic preservation." Urban historian Dolores Hayden, for example, studies how women and ethnic minorities are often erased from the public landscape. She argues that these spaces can be reclaimed even without an intact physical structure. Similarly, architectural historian and cultural geographer Michael R. Allen contends that symbolical spaces are worth preserving. He uses the former site of the QuikTrip in Ferguson as one such example. The structure was set on fire during riots that erupted after the murder of Michael Brown in 2014. The work of Hayden and Allen explores how to memorialize past people and events even when the built environment has been disturbed. Hayden, *The Power of Place*; Michael R. Allen, "What Historic Preservation Can Learn from Ferguson," in *Bending the Future: 50 Ideas for the Next 50 Years of Historic Preservation in the United States*, ed. Max Page and Marla R. Miller (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016); For more information about the spaces of transient communities, see Jen Jack Giesecking, "The Geographies of LGBTQ Lives: In and Beyond Cities, Neighborhoods, and Bars," in *Communities and Place: A Thematic Approach to the Histories of LGBTQ Communities in the United States*, ed. Katherine Crawford-Lackey and Megan E. Springate (New York: Berghahn Books, forthcoming).
 26. Chris St. Clair, "Metro Historical Commission Approves First Marker to Honor LGBT Struggle," Nashville Public Radio, 8 October 2017, accessed 27 August 2018, <http://www.nashvillepublicradio.org/post/metro-historical-commission-approves-first-marker-honor-lgbt-struggle#stream/0>.
 27. Andrew Hurley, *Beyond Preservation: Using Public History to Revitalize Inner Cities* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010), 114.
 28. Loraine Hutchins, "Making Bisexual Visible," in *Identities and Place: Changing Labels and Intersectional Communities of LGBTQ and Two-Spirit People in the United States*, ed. Katherine Crawford-Lackey and Megan E. Springate (New York: Berghahn Books, 2019).
 29. Susan Stryker, "Transgender History in the United States and the Places That Matter," in *Identities and Place: Changing Labels and Intersectional Communities of LGBTQ and Two-Spirit People in the United States*, ed. Katherine Crawford-Lackey and Megan E. Springate (New York: Berghahn Books, 2019).
 30. It should be noted that some gay individuals and communities still associate the term "queer" with very negative connotations due to the word's charged history. Authors in this study use this term to be more inclusive of identities that do not fit within lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender com-

munities. Popular LGBT media outlets such as the *Advocate* and *Go Magazine* have published articles about the benefits and potential detriments of using this word given its historical context. Mark Segal, "The Problem with the Word 'Queer,'" *Advocate*, 11 February 2016, accessed 31 August 2018, <https://www.advocate.com/commentary/2016/2/11/problem-word-queer>; Dayna Troisi, "I'm A Lesbian and I'm Not Offended by the Word Queer," *Go Magazine*, 17 January 2018, accessed 31 August 2018, <http://gomag.com/article/im-a-lesbian-and-im-not-offended-by-the-word-queer/>.

31. Whisnant, *Imperiled Promise*.
32. The Pauli Murray Family Home (Durham, NC) and Earl Hall, located on the campus of Columbia University, are examples of National Register listings and National Historic Landmark designations that have been recognized since the publication of the LGBTQ theme study. *LGBTQ America* has also led to the amendment of existing listings, including Whiskey Row, located in Louisville, KY. View the nominations: Pauli Murray Family Home, <https://www.nps.gov/places/pauli-murray-family-home.htm>; Earl Hall, http://www.nyclgbtsites.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/NY_NewYorkCounty_EarlHall.pdf; and Kentucky's Whiskey Row, https://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/places/pdfs/AD89000385_03_13_2017.pdf.

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