
The Cheraw
*African
American
Heritage*
History Guide



*Where Our History
Becomes a Legacy*

African-Americans have persevered through hardships and contributed greatly to Cheraw's history. In this guide of 45 historic sites, you will discover Horace King, a slave from the 1800s who was emancipated and had a successful bridge building businesses. You will find sites that touch on religion especially after the Civil War when many newly freed slaves decided it was time to establish their own churches within the community. Churches have always played a vital role and served as anchors for African –American neighborhoods. These churches were also a common meeting place for community events and to discuss social causes of the day. Education was important to African-Americans and after being denied access to education, schools were opened in Cheraw to educate the African-American children. One of the first schools to educate blacks was Coulter Memorial Academy. During segregation, Cheraw had a multitude of African-American businesses. Many of these businesses no longer exist but there a few that have survived and they are highlighted in this guide. Several individuals from Cheraw led the charge during the Civil Rights era and one case went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1971. Cheraw's most famous native son is John Birks "Dizzy" Gillespie, the trumpeter, who usually opened his performances with "I'm Dizzy Gillespie from Cheraw, South Carolina". We hope you enjoy reading about two centuries of fascinating history and the vital role and achievements African-Americans played in Cheraw's legacy.

Education

1

Masonic Lodge: *2nd St. (c. 1924)*

Coulter Memorial Academy opened in 1881 through the efforts of Mrs. Carolina E. Coulter of Hanover, Indiana, the Women's Department of the Board of Missions for Freedmen and Reverend J.P. Crawford. The administration building was built by the students of the manual training department. The boarding school and junior college educated African-American students and later merged with the public school system in 1949. Coulter Memorial Academy closed its doors in 1955. This building currently belongs to the Santorum Lodge No. 25 (PHA).

Coulter Memorial Library: 302 Second St.

This building, once an old store, was converted into a library for Coulter Memorial Academy. This site is now Cheraw Tax Service.

Chapman Training School Building:

(located behind the Masonic Lodge)

This site was once known as the Chapman Training School Building, part of the Coulter Memorial Academy campus. It served as the junior college where students were trained to become teachers. After the academy closed its doors in 1955, the doors reopened on November 11, 1957 as the Barbara Lawrence School, a nursery and kindergarten that served the African-American community until it closed in 1995.

Robert Smalls School: 318 Front St. (c. 1951)

Robert Smalls School is named after Robert Smalls, a slave born in Beaufort, SC in 1839. Smalls became known for his heroism during the Civil War. He served more than ten years as a representative in the U.S.

Congress. The original Robert Smalls School was a two-story brick building erected about 1920 on two and one half acres.

The campus also included two small frame buildings. The

original two-story brick building was torn down and a new Robert Smalls School was erected around 1951. The new school held fourteen classrooms and in 1963, nine more classrooms, library and lunchroom were added. The Robert Smalls School is considered an equalization school built in response to *Briggs v. Elliott*, a lawsuit that challenged the state's constitutional "separate but equal" education provision. The school is currently used by several agencies and community organizations.

**Long Middle School: 1010 W. Greene St.**

Long Middle School is the former location of Long High School, a high school that educated African-Americans prior to integration. Long High School was constructed in 1954. The school was named after Dr. G.W. Long, former pastor of Second Presbyterian Church and the president of Coulter

Memorial Academy. Mr. Henry L. Marshall was the high school's first principal. After integration, it became Long Junior High for the Cheraw area students. The only building left from the original school is the gymnasium.

6

Cheraw High School: *649 Chesterfield Hwy.*

If you graduated from Cheraw High School after 1974, then this song should sound familiar; "Cheraw High, dear Cheraw High! We sing thy praise as days go by...." After the high school was integrated, two African-American students attending Cheraw High School decided to write a new alma mater to unify the school. In 1974, Margo Pitts and Naomi Brown began composing a new alma mater. In 1975, during their senior year, Cheraw High School adopted it as the new official alma mater and continues to use it today.

Churches & Cemeteries

7

Wesley United Methodist Church:

307 Greene St. (c. 1915)

Wesley United Methodist Church was organized in 1867 after the Civil War. The Reverend Henry Cardoza was the first pastor. Under Rev. Cardoza's leadership, the church purchased a tract of land on Greene Street. Dizzy Gillespie attended Wesley United Methodist Church as a young child.

8

Mount Hebron A.M.E. Zion Church:

224 Jersey St.

Mount Hebron A.M.E. Zion Church was founded on May 2, 1902. Land was purchased and the first edifice was built on Kershaw Street. In November 1904, the church moved to its present location on Jersey Street.

9

Pee Dee Union Baptist Church:

92 Chestnut St. (c.1912)

After the Civil War, founding members of Pee Dee Union Baptist Church applied for and received letters of dismissal from Cheraw Hill Baptist Church, consisting of white



and black members. Pee Dee Union Baptist Church was founded in 1867 by Pastor Wisdom London. The first church was a wooden structure located on River Hill facing old #1 Highway. The church was destroyed in a severe storm and rebuilt in 1912.

Old Saint David's Church: *Church St. (c. 1770)*

St. David's Parish was organized in 1768. The church was built on authority given by King George III. It was the last Anglican church built in South Carolina under British rule. Early records reveal that slaves attended Sunday school and were also baptized at the church. During the 1840s, a woman in the congregation conducted Sunday school for the African-American children after evening service. Old Saint David's Church still retains the slave gallery.

10

Triumph the Church and Kingdom of God in Christ: *369 Huger St.*

Triumph Church of Cheraw was founded in 1916. On July 22, 1921, they purchased a one room wooden structure on Huger Street. Surrounding neighbors would sit on the porch and the streets were packed with people as they listened to good preaching, testimonies and singing coming from the church. Reverend Alexander A. Davis preached his trial sermon at Triumph Church, September 1922 and remained the pastor until his death in 1982. In the late 1960s a new church and fellowship hall was built.

11

Foundry Hill Cemetery: *Jersey Street*

Foundry Hill Cemetery is Cheraw's historic black cemetery. There are graves dating from the late 19th century. Most of the African-Americans who attended local churches in Cheraw are buried here.

12

G.W. Long Presbyterian Church: *312 Second St.*

G.W. Long Presbyterian Church was founded in 1881 by the Board of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. They were also instrumental in establishing Coulter Memorial Academy. The church, originally named Second

13



Presbyterian Church, was later renamed as a memorial tribute to its longtime pastor. Dr. George Waldo Long and his wife Lillian Bull Long are buried near the front entrance of the church.

Businesses

14

College Inn: 324 Second St.

Mr. C. Charles Cole opened the College Inn for business in 1935. It served as a favorite hangout and eatery for the students who attended Coulter Memorial Academy as well as for the African-American citizens living in town. Mr. Cole was an educator, successful businessman and the first African-American to serve on Cheraw City Council. This establishment is still open and run by Mr. Cole's daughter and husband. If you knew Mr. Cole and asked him how he was doing his famous reply would be, "Fine, Fine, Superfine!"

15

Cole's Service Station and General Appliance Company: Kershaw St.

Mr. John Saunders Cole had two businesses on Kershaw Street, the first being a service station. Mr. Cole closed the service station and later opened Cole's General Appliance Company to assist families who needed appliances but could not obtain credit at the other local stores. Mr. Cole was an educator, businessman and a servant to those in need.

16

Mr. John E. McCall Law Office: 121 Kershaw St.

"Attorney McCall" was the first African-American attorney from Chesterfield County and he worked for African-Americans throughout the county. He was instrumental in the integration of public schools and was influential locally, statewide, and nationally for his affiliations with the NAACP and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity. Mr. McCall had law offices in Cheraw and Hartsville, South Carolina. He was also a friend and college roommate of



JOHN E.
ATTORNEY

Justice Ernest Finney, who served on the South Carolina Supreme Court. This site is now Unique Florist, Cheraw's first florist owned by an African-American.

Hanna House: 288 Second St.

The Hanna house was built by Dr. and Mrs. John Vincent Hanna. He was the first African-American dentist in Cheraw and practiced dentistry in his home office. Dr. Hanna also practiced dentistry in various towns for the South Carolina school system. Mrs. Gladys Hanna taught at Coulter Memorial Academy and Long High School.

17

McDonnell Properties: 116 Kershaw St.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles McDonnell were the proprietors of several businesses. In the 1940s, they opened Arrow Dry Cleaners on Second Street and in 1948 Superior Dry Cleaners on Kershaw Street. Mr. Charles McDonnell was an expert tailor who made clothes for blacks and whites. Mrs. Isabell McDonnell operated a popular social spot, Sonny's Grill and Lounge.

18

"Chitlin Charles" Restaurant:

Corner of S. Huger St. and Maynard St.

Mr. Charles McClellan, better known as "Chitlin Charles," operated his store-restaurant on this lot. The restaurant no longer stands, but stories linger of his famous chitterlings and how black and white folks traveled from all over the Carolinas for a sample of his delicious "chitlins."

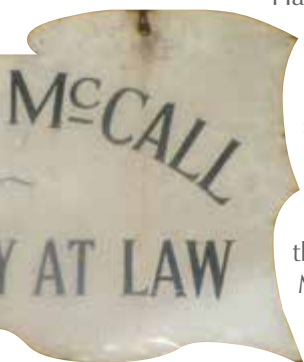
19

Holly Inn Motel: 311 Church St.

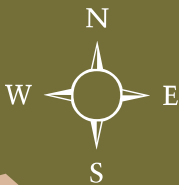
This site was the home of famous beauty Adelaide Marshall who performed as a chorus girl at the Harlem jazz night club, the Cotton Club. She also

20

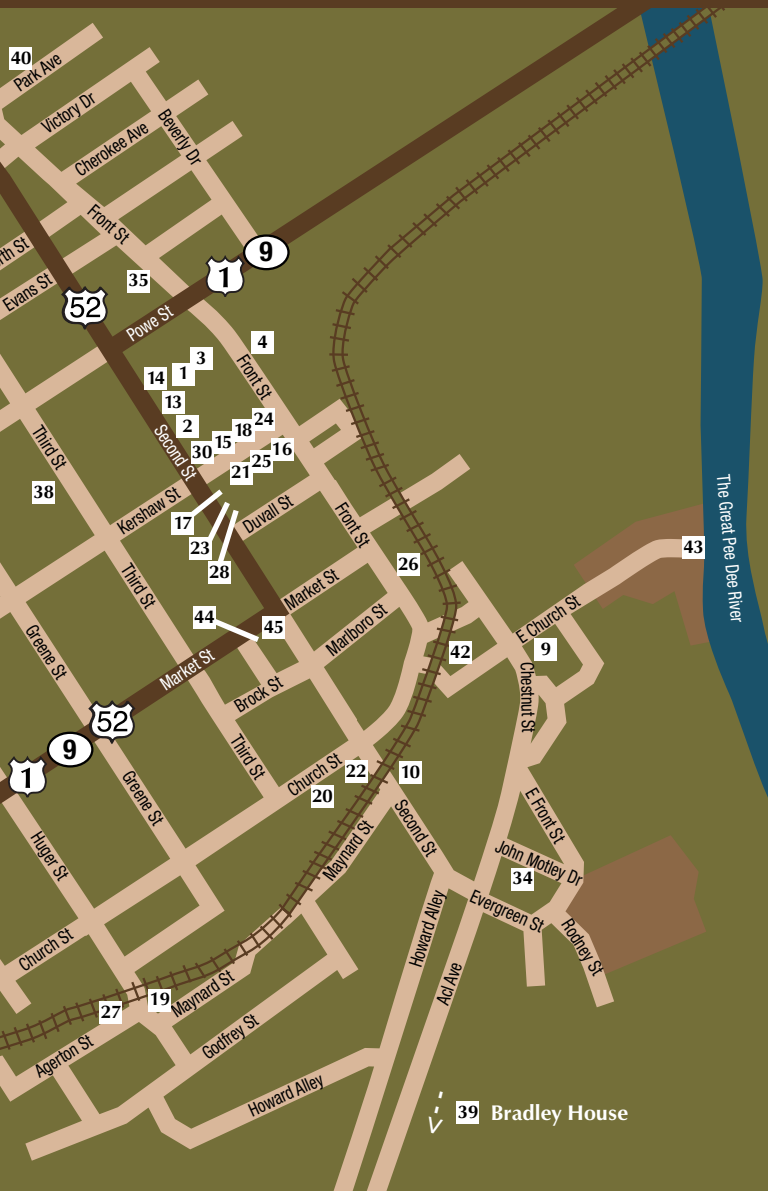
performed at the oldest and most famous musical hall to showcase African-American performers, the Apollo Theatre, also located in Harlem, NY. Marshall was the proprietor of the Holly Inn Motel. The home burned in 1996, leaving only the motel sign as a reminder.



Cheraw, South Carolina



- | | | | |
|----|--|----|--|
| 1 | Masonic Lodge | 13 | G.W. Long
Presbyterian Church |
| 2 | Coulter Memorial Library | 14 | College Inn |
| 3 | Chapman Training
School Building | 15 | Cole's Service Station
and General Appliance
Company |
| 4 | Robert Smalls School | 16 | Mr. John E. McCall
Law Office |
| 5 | Long Middle School | 17 | Hanna House |
| 6 | Cheraw High School | 18 | McDonnell Properties |
| 7 | Wesley United
Methodist Church | 19 | "Chitlin Charles"
Restaurant |
| 8 | Mount Hebron A.M.E.
Zion Church | 20 | Holly Inn Motel |
| 9 | Pee Dee Union
Baptist Church | 21 | Southern African
American
Heritage Center |
| 10 | Old Saint David's Church | 22 | Burch's Motel and Café / |
| 11 | Triumph the Church and
Kingdom of God in Christ | | |
| 12 | Foundry Hill Cemetery | | |



Kollocks's Barbershop

- 23 Morris Funeral Cottage Inc.
- 24 Reid's Funeral Home
- 25 Kennedy's Radio and TV Shop
- 26 Samuel D. Bass, Sr.
- 27 Ellerbe's Grill and Grocery
- 28 Commercial Businesses
- 29 Poe House
- 30 Marshall House
- 31 Crawford House
- 32 Robinson House
- 33 Wilson House
- 34 John Motley Housing Community

- 35 Bridges House
- 36 Enfield
- 37 Pitts House
- 38 Slave Cabins
- 39 Bradley House
- 40 Drakeford House
- 41 Dizzy Gillespie Birthplace and Park
- 42 Levi G. Byrd Park
- 43 Horace King and the Cheraw Bridge Riverside Park
- 44 Dizzy Gillespie Bronze Statue
- 45 Old Market Hall

Southern African American Heritage

Center: *125 Kershaw St.*

Reverend Wilkin Williams opened the Olde Wash Tub in the heart of the African-American business



district during the 1960s so blacks could have a place to wash their clothes. Reverend Williams was a pastor, the principal of Robert Smalls School, and a successful businessman. His wife, Mrs. Rosalie Williams, is a retired educator. This site currently serves as the Southern African

American Heritage Center, a museum dedicated to preserving African-American contributions in Chesterfield County. The Heritage Center also has an exhibit dedicated to “Dizzy” Gillespie.

Burch’s Motel and Café / Kollocks’s Barbershop:

Corner of Second St. and Church St.

Elder Burch was a minister, singer and businessman. In the 1920s, Elder Burch and his gospel group recorded with Victor Records. His music has recently been rediscovered internationally. He owned a motel and café near the railroad tracks. This was a major accomplishment for an African-American to have a business in a prime location during segregation. Because of its closeness to the railway, patrons both black and white frequented his café. Mr. Walter Bell Kollock operated a barber shop at this location during the 1940s.

Morris Funeral Cottage Inc.: *284 Second St.*

Morris Funeral Cottage, Inc. was established in 1936 by Mr. Joseph H.W. Morris, Jr. In the beginning, the funeral home was located in a three room wooden house. A new funeral home and chapel was built and a dedication service held on October 25, 1970.

Reid’s Funeral Home: *108 Kershaw St.*

William J. Reid and James A. Harrington opened Reid-Harrington Funeral Home on October 26, 1949. In 1958, Mr. Reid became the sole owner and the name was changed to Reid’s Funeral Home. The first funeral home was a wooden structure

having been used as a boy's dormitory for Coulter Memorial Academy. In 1957, a fire destroyed the property and a new funeral home was built in 1958. A new chapel was added in 1989.

Kennedy's Radio and TV Shop: *123 Kershaw St.*

Mr. William Taft Kennedy, Jr. owned and operated his radio and television shop at this location during the 1960s.

25

Samuel D. Bass, Sr.: *122 Front St.*

Mr. Samuel D. Bass, Sr. was a businessman and farmer who operated several businesses at this location beginning in the 1950s. The brick building had two storefronts built by master carpenters, Mr. James Strong and Reverend James Davis. Mr. Bass operated a liquor store on one side and a café on the other side. At one time, a fish market and dry cleaners operated at this location. The Bass building was destroyed in a fire in October 2007.

26

Ellerbe's Grill and Grocery: *101 Agerton St.*

This site has always been a fixture in the neighborhood and over the years has seen many owners. During the 1920s Ms. Belle Sutton operated a store and dance hall known as Sutton Hall. Mr. Melvin Ellerbe operated a neighborhood grocery store and a social spot, Ellerbe's Grill and Grocery. He opened for business in the early 1960s and the business closed in 1998. Mr. Ellerbe was the last person to operate a business at this location and the property remains in his family.

27

Commercial Businesses: *Second St.*

This row of early commercial buildings has always been a part of the African-American businesses community. Some of the businesses that have operated from this location are cafés, barber shops, pool halls and beauty salons. Thriving African-American businesses continue to operate from this site.

28

Homes

Poe House: *345 and 347 Huger St.*

This is the childhood home place of Mrs. Vera Powe Swann. Mrs. Swann and her husband, Dr.

29

Darius Swann, filed a class action lawsuit against the Charlotte-Mecklenburg County school system in 1968 after their son was assigned to an all-black school far from their home while there was an integrated school nearby. The *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg County Board of Education* case went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which in 1971, sided with Mecklenburg County federal judge James B. McMillan. The Supreme Court ruled that busing could be used to achieve school integration.

30

Marshall House: *300 Second St. (c.1927)*

Formerly known as the Utica Cottage, the Marshall House was built with money donated by the Utica Presbytery Church of New York. The home was used to house the principal and his family, women teachers and female students. The house has thirteen rooms and two large hallways. Mr. Henry Marshall, principal of Coulter Memorial Academy, purchased and continued to live in the home with his family after the school closed its doors. His widow Mrs. Flossie Marshall, a retired educator and her family recently donated this house to the Coulter-Memorial Alumni Association, Inc.

31

Crawford House: *3 Foundry Hill Rd.*

Mr. and Mrs. James E. Crawford, Sr. lived here and raised their two children. Mr. Crawford, a native of Colleton County, moved to Cheraw in 1954 with his wife, Lois E. Reid Crawford, who was a native of Cheraw. In 1957, Mr. Crawford became the first African-American to be hired by the Cheraw Chronicle as a linotype operator. He was an advocate for social justice and was active in the NAACP. Mrs. Crawford was an educator in the Colleton and Chesterfield County school systems.

32

Robinson House: *814 Kershaw St.*

Mrs. Bernice Stokes Robinson was a dedicated educator and community servant. She was valedictorian of the 1932 graduating class at Coulter Memorial Academy. In 1950, she graduated summa cum laude from Barber Scotia College in Concord, NC. She taught over forty-one years in the Chesterfield County school system and served as Director of the Barbara Lawrence School. Mrs. Robinson was the first secretary of the

South Carolina Conference of Branches NAACP. She was selected by Bell South to appear in the 2000 African-American history calendar for the month of June. She was married to Major Anderson Robinson, III.

Wilson House: *200 Prince St.*

This is the home site of Alphonso Wilson, the first African-American to serve as deputy sheriff with the Chesterfield County Sheriff's Department. Wilson was sworn in on August 1, 1967.

33

John Motley Housing Community:

John Motley Drive

This site was named after native son Dr. John Motley whose musical career spanned over 60 years. He was the recipient of numerous music awards. Motley directed and conducted several choruses throughout New York, accompanied Marian Anderson in recordings and concerts, and was the founder of the All-City Concert Choir of New York.



34

Bridges House: *421 Front St.*

This is the home site of George Bridges, the first African-American police officer with the Town of Cheraw. He was employed by the Cheraw Police Department from 1965-1973.

35

Enfield: *135 McIver St. (c. 1815)*

This house served as Union General Oliver Otis Howard's headquarters during the Civil War. General Howard later became the commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau and a founder of Howard University in Washington, DC. He served as president of the university and the school was named for him.

36

Pitts House: *922 Kershaw St.*

This is the home of Mr. and Mrs. Chester A. Pitts. Mrs. Mamie Pitts was the Title 1 nurse for all schools in Cheraw. She was a surgical staff nurse at Chesterfield Memorial Hospital. Mrs. Pitts also spent four years in the Women's Army Corps during World War II. Mr. Pitts was an educator

37

and a band director at Rosenwald High School in Society Hill, South Carolina.

38 **Slave Cabins:** *321 Third St. (c. 1820)*

There are two original slave cabins located behind the main house. The current owner's great-grandfather purchased the house in 1875. Preservationist Joseph McGill has a documentary project entitled "Slave Cabin Project" where he sleeps in slave cabins to promote preserving these historical sites. Mr. McGill slept in one of the renovated cabins on April 2011.

39 **Bradley House:** *9 Martin Luther King Dr.*

Mr. Theodore Bradley is known as the local historian in the African-American community. He is a deacon at Pee Dee Union Baptist Church. He was the second African-American to serve on Cheraw Town Council, serving three terms.

40 **Drakeford House:** *109 Park Ave.*

This is the home site of Harry Drakeford, Jr., the first African-American police chief with the Cheraw Police Department, he was promoted to this position in 1990. Drakeford joined the Cheraw Police Department in 1968.

Parks

41 **Dizzy Gillespie Birthplace and Park:** *Huger St.*

This site was once the home place where John Birks "Dizzy" spent his childhood. He was born on October 21, 1917 and died on January 6, 1993. The home site was dedicated as a park in October 2002. The artwork exhibited in the park was created by artist Bob



Doster and Cheraw High School students. Doster's musical fence depicts notes to "Salt Peanuts," one of Gillespie's famous known works. The park is a major attraction during the SC Jazz Festival that commemorates the talents of Dizzy Gillespie.

Levi G. Byrd Park: *Church St.*

On September 21, 2008, the Town of Cheraw dedicated the park in memory of the legacy of Mr. Levi G. Byrd. Mr. Byrd was instrumental in establishing the South Carolina State NAACP in 1939. He also served as treasurer on both the state and local levels. The town also designated December 19th as Levi G. Byrd Day in 1971.

42

Horace King and the Cheraw Bridge**Riverside Park:** *NE Church St.*

Horace King was born a slave in the Chesterfield District on September 8, 1807. King became the slave of John and Ann Godwin in 1830. Both King and Godwin were well versed in bridge building. Eventually, the Godwins successfully petitioned for his emancipation by the Alabama Senate and House of Representatives on February 3, 1843. As a slave, King was living in Cheraw when Ithiel Town, the inventor of a popular bridge building system, came to Cheraw and consulted on the Pee Dee River Bridge. The Pee Dee River Bridge became the model for King's bridge building career and he replicated Town's lattice trusses over many southern rivers. After his emancipation, King formed his own construction company with his family, King Brothers Bridge Company. King, an architect, engineer and bridge builder, was posthumously inducted into the state of Alabama's Engineering Hall of Fame in 1989.

43

Dizzy Gillespie Bronze Statue:*Town Green Market St.*

In October 2002, on what would have been John Birks "Dizzy" Gillespie's 85th birthday, the town of Cheraw and Gillespie's family members dedicated a seven-foot statue of Dizzy Gillespie playing his trademark bent horn. The statue was designed by Ed Dwight of Denver, Colorado.


44

Old Market Hall: *Town Green Market St. (c. 1836)*

The Market Hall was erected in 1836 by contractor Conlaw Peter Lynch. Records indicate the lower portion of the building was once an open area, and was used as a market where slaves were sold.

45




 Please visit the
South Carolina
Welcome Centers
 for traveler assistance.

Located in the northeastern midlands of South Carolina, Cheraw is a 40-minute drive from I-95, 85 miles northeast of Columbia, SC and 75 miles southeast of Charlotte. Cheraw is easily accessible via US 1, US 52 and SC 9.

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Cover Photos:

Top: Dizzy Gillespie Bronze Statue
 Left to right
 Masonic Lodge, Foundry Hill Cemetery, Slave Cabin

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