
20 Minutes from Blair



Start your engines!

Ready to find out about some AMAZING places to visit, that are less than 20 minutes away from the heart of Blair, Nebraska? Then go ahead, keep reading!!



Washington County Museum

Awakening a passion for our history.

Hop into your car and take a nice Sunday drive down Highway 75, go down Main Street of Fort Calhoun, park in front of the Washington County Historical Museum, and walk on inside. Once inside, you will meet the very kind curators of the museum, who will be able to answer any question you have about Washington County's history. At the museum, you can dig up "dinosaur bones" and rocks, look at antique tractor parts and farm equipment, old knick-knacks, artworks, unique trophies, a railing from the stairs at the Crowell Mansion, and they have a whole room full of interesting books, papers, and pictures dating back to the 1800s! That's really old!! We looked at all the papers, doing research, and to preserve them, we had to wear white cotton gloves so we didn't leave fingerprints. They take such good care of everything there, it's absolutely amazing! When I first went there, I wasn't too excited about going to a museum, but by the time I had to leave, I didn't want to go. It was just so interesting!! I hope you are interested and want to go to the Washington County Histori-

cal Museum sometime soon! While in Fort Calhoun, I also sug-

Washington County Museum



This is a picture of the Washington County Museum, in Fort Calhoun.

gest going to the Frahm House. It's just a few blocks away, we walked there when we went to the museum. You can get a tour of the house, and trust me, it's worth it. I thought it was a little scary, and it almost seemed haunted, but now, looking back on it, it was okay. It's just old and there's a few creepy dolls in the little girls room, but other than that, it's really cool! If I

were you, I would definitely consider taking a tour of the house sometime!

GALLERY 1.1 Frahm House



This is a picture of the people I worked on my iBook with when we went to the Frahm House in Fort Calhoun. It was a lot of fun, but kind of scary too!

Blair Depot

Imagine that you are climbing off the train in Blair, Nebraska, your new town. You are in the train depot, a nice little cozy building in the center of town, a town that exists because of the railroad your train just traveled on. John I. Blair's railroad company purchased lots of land by the railroad, knowing that someday people would be moving here. He sold those lots, and named the town that formed Blair. Now fast-forward about 100 years. That depot is still standing today. Now, it's located in Lyons Park in Blair, and it's painted red, but it's the same thing! Isn't that cool? It still has all the same floorboards, but everything else is new, including the new garage-style doors they put on it for easier access. Inside, it's a little building, but it's very interesting. They have a newspaper that was found inside one of the walls when they remodeled, signs from around the depot when it was first built, and other interesting things. When we first started our iBook projects, we met some Blair historians here, and got a tour. Did you know the depot isn't actually at its first location? It used to be at the

crossing of the two railroads that came through Blair. Now, there isn't a second railroad, and the depot isn't at the same spot. It has been moved about three times, to different places around Blair. Now, it is at its final location, and has been very nicely remodeled during the summer of 2013. It is now nice and red and new-looking. You should take a tour sometime, so you can see it for yourself!

GALLERY 1.2 Blair Depot



This is a picture of the original depot, which was later moved and remodeled to look how it does today.



Wilson Island State Park

You remember when you would have a long weekend off of school, so you and your parents would take a little camping trip to Wilson Island State Park. You would drive across the bridge into Missouri Valley, IA, where Wilson Island is located. You would arrive, and go to your campsite. You parked, and started to set up your tent. Later that night, you would go fishing and have a great time. You're sad now, because you can't go there anymore. It's still closed from the flooding in 2011, but you remember how much fun you had the last time you went there, and look forward to going again when they re-open in 2014. Wilson Island State Park started as an island in the middle of the Missouri River, as stated in its name. It used to just be a **sandbar**, but now it covers 544 acres of dense cottonwood trees and land. It was named after former General George Wilson and opened in 1900. At Wilson Island, you can go fishing on the Missouri River, hunting in the cottonwood trees it covers, and hiking on its nature trails. If you aren't overly excited about spending the night in a tent, you can rent

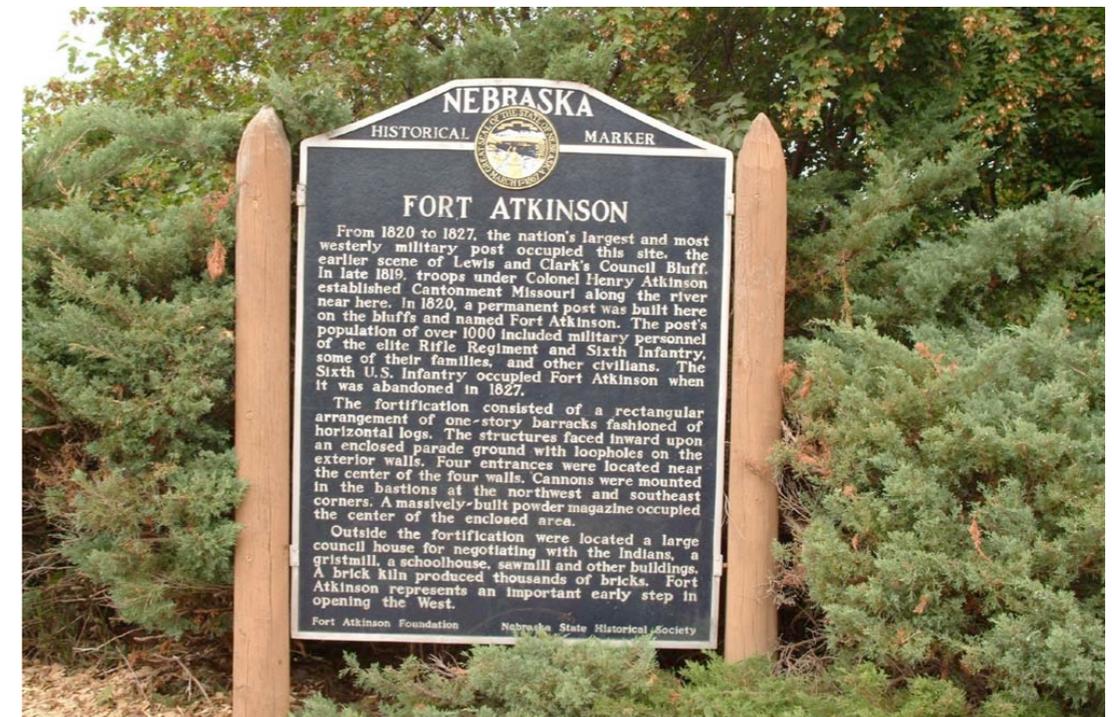
a cabin for the nights you plan on staying there. While there, you can see the Loess Hills, the Missouri River flood plain, you can see deer grazing, and eagles soaring, you can go mushroom hunting, bird watching, and bicycling. Also while you're there, you have access to a half mile of Missouri River shoreline, where you can go fishing!



Lewis and Clark historical marker

Did you know Lewis and Clark came through Blair once? They're part of the reason Blair is even on a map! If they hadn't come through Nebraska, maybe the railroad never would've followed the path it did, and if the railroad didn't follow the same path, Blair never would've been a town, because the railroad is the only reason Blair is a town! Isn't it cool that over 100 years before Blair was a town, people came through here on a journey that will always be a huge part of America's history? I think it is! The Lewis and Clark historical marker marks where Lewis and Clark came through Blair on their journey across the U.S. They camped near where the Y.M.C.A. is today, right outside of Blair on Highway 75, for a couple days. They stayed there July 30th-August 2nd. That's not very long, but it was for a good reason. They stayed there because they were going to meet with some of the Native Americans of the region on a **plateau** near Fort Calhoun a few days later. They were meeting to hold a council and to make peace. The general area where they met is now Fort Atkinson, and the spe-

cific **bluff** is called Council Bluff. There is a marker near where they camped that you can visit, and the Historical Walking Tour of Blair goes past there on its journey around Blair.



Alpacas of the Heartland, LLC

You're bored, and you're on the internet, looking up places to visit when you're bored and have nothing to do. You discover that today is the open house at Alpacas of the Heartland, and you want to go. You convince your parents into taking you, and when you get there you discover there are almost 400 people there, but it's not too bad since they live on 13 acres outside of Fort Calhoun, Nebraska. It's a crazy number, but eventually you see why. You finally get your first glimpse of the alpacas, and you fall in love instantly. You find the owners and start asking questions automatically. You ask when they opened, how they got interested, how many alpacas they have, and a bunch of other questions. You discover that they started in September of 2008, and they got interested by a person they saw when they were driving home from church, and they have 27 alpacas - 16 girls and 11 boys. You are curious about what they do with the alpacas, why they even have them. Turns out, they are practically pets. They only use them for fur and breeding. They shear them every spring, and breed and

sell them. Alpacas cost a lot, ranging from \$400 to over \$1,000. They are all very friendly except one, and they will all eat carrots right out of your hands. They don't have any defenses, only their toenails which they get cut every couple months. If a coyote or other animal would get in their pen right after they got their nails trimmed, they wouldn't be very

GALLERY 1.3 Alpaca Farm!



This is a picture of one of the alpacas at the alpaca farm.



safe. You go in and get to pet them and notice they are very soft and friendly, and leave wanting one.

Skinny Bones

You bound out of the car and to the entrance, up through the gates, and pay your money to get in. It's a Friday night, you got all your homework done for the weekend, and you are just bursting with excitement of going through the **corn maze** at Skinny Bones. You turn around and motion impatiently at your parents and siblings, and once they catch up, you insist on going through the maze, right away! You venture into the maze, thinking it won't take that long, but over an hour later, you realize you are still in the maze, and you have no clue how to get out! Eventually, you get out, and by that time, it's starting to get a little chilly outside, so you stop by the concessions stand and get a hot chocolate. Then you go and get your face painted, go on the hay rack ride, and pick a pumpkin. Before the night is over, you have done everything there is to do at Skinny Bones, and that's a lot of stuff for one night! You have also probably seen every single one of the Bledsoe family members who created Skinny Bones. Jeff and Maria own Skinny Bones because they are the parents of Hayley, Courtney, Ja-

red, Emily, and Miranda. They are all very nice children, and the youngest is in eighth grade right now. Jared is actually one of my classmates! Jeff and Maria were on TV once, too! They were on the show World's Strictest Parents, even though they are extremely nice people and very nice parents.

GALLERY 1.4 Skinny Bones



This is a picture of the Bledsoe family outside their corn maze.

Jackson's Buffalo Farm

Imagine this. You are driving with your parents down Highway 133 towards Omaha. You look to your right near the Blair Airport, and see what appears to be a buffalo out there. You point this out to your parents, and they say that, "Yes, it really is a buffalo." They're right! A man by the name of Bob Jackson owns a farm near the airport, and he has around 30 head of buffalo on his farm. Isn't that neat? You ask if you can go there on your way back from Omaha, and your parents say, "Yes, you can." On your way back home, you stop at Bob Jackson's house to see his buffaloes. You are very curious about why he decided to have buffaloes so you ask, and he tells you. He became interested because one of his friends in Kansas has buffaloes, and his land was too small to farm. Since that's what practically everyone around Blair does, he wanted to be different. So he got buffaloes! He got his first buffaloes in 1979, and today he has between 40-50 head of buffalo at all times. He sells his buffaloes for breeding and for meat to anyone who wants some, and he sells a lot of meat. He says he

can't take the buffalo to the prairie, so he brings the prairie to them. He ships in Kansas prairie hay and has about 40 bales of hay for them to eat. He takes you to see the buffalo, and you notice there are two different pens for the buffaloes to be in. This is because he doesn't want the big buffaloes to hurt the littler ones. He is very sweet to them and takes very, very good care of them.

GALLERY 1.5 Buffalo Farm!



This is a picture of one of the younger buffaloes.

Dana College

Imagine you are taking a run through Blair, you go through the west side of town, and you end up by Dana College. You see a large number of cool brick buildings and a sign that says Dana College, but you don't see any students. You wonder where all the students that must go to college here are at. They couldn't possibly all be in class at the same time, could they? No, actually, there isn't anyone taking classes there right now. Even though school is in session, there isn't anyone at Dana. Dana College was founded in 1884, started by a group of Danish pioneers who wanted a place to educate each other and a place to worship together. They created Dana College, and it's still standing today. It was still used as a school until 2010, when it was put up for sale. Midlands University out of Fremont, Nebraska bought Dana and is planning on re-opening it in 2015 or 2016. Isn't it interesting that something that started in 1884 is still going today, even though it isn't in use right now, but it will be soon? I think that's really cool, that you can still visit some of the same places people went over

100 years ago, that you can still see what they did, how they changed Blair, how they might've changed the whole state, maybe the whole country. Who knows, maybe even the whole world! If you do anything before you choose a college, definitely look into Dana. See if you, too, can make a difference in your little world, maybe the whole entire world!

GALLERY 1.6 Dana College



This is a picture of a proposed plan for Dana campus, from 1921.



DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge

Do you love the outdoors? Do you love to see animals in their natural habitat, see trees, lakes, rivers, and ponds? Well if you do, DeSoto is the perfect place for you to visit! The entrance to DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge is located outside of Missouri Valley, Iowa, but it is actually only about 5 miles from Blair. You just have to go over the river to get there. Even though the entrance is in Iowa, about 60% of the refuge is actually in Washington County. DeSoto serves as a stopover area for migrating waterfowl. Some species include **mallards**, blue and green winged **teal**, northern **pintail**, American **wigeon**, wood ducks, Canada geese and **pelicans**. There have been up to 550,000 Canada geese and 50,000 ducks during the fall migration! Can you imagine seeing that many birds?! As many as 145 bald eagles have been seen at one time at the refuge. I guess our national bird has a favorite diner close to home! A lot of white-tailed deer and wild turkeys are there also. They are beautiful creatures and watching them in their natural habitat is definitely one of the many reasons people go to De-

Soto. There are certain restrictions for this refuge though. You can't hunt any of the animals. DeSoto is their safe haven and if you hunt them during the no hunting season, you can be **finned** a lot of money. If you visit DeSoto, you can enjoy the view of the beautiful lake from the visitors center. There are also a lot of exciting nature trails, fishing areas for people of all ages, a **restored** prairie that is like looking at the past, and a bookstore and gift shop to buy **souvenirs** to remember your exciting experience. The gift shop holds many treasures that kids love! DeSoto is fun for all ages. The creatures that inhabit the woods are fun to watch from the paths, fishing is a great way to spend time with your family and have fun! But remember, don't take too many!

DeSoto is a public place so anyone can get in! It is free for all ages, but there is a \$3 car entry fee. This money goes to the care of the reservation and the museum at the visitors center! Did I mention they have a museum? It has many artifacts from back in the day and a bird watching room, as well as many other attractions. Also at DeSoto, there's the Bertrand Exhibit. The Bertrand was a boat that sunk a hundred or so years ago in DeSoto. No one knew about it for a long time, and when they found it, they discovered that many of the items on the ship had been preserved perfectly while underwater! There are many animals that have been through **taxidermy** (stuffing them **post-mortem**) that line the hallways with interesting facts. It is like a sea of facts and information, and there is no better place to get it from! DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge is a must-see and is a great learning experience!

GALLERY 1.7 DeSoto



Nature!



The Bertrand

Are you intrigued by history? Do you like learning about lost treasures that hide in the depths of rivers? Well then you should visit the Bertrand! This 1860's **steamboat** was found 28 feet below sea level in February of 1968 by Jesse Pursell and Sam Corbino. This ship was carrying a cargo of food and **mercury** from St. Louis to Fort Benton, Montana Territory, and is believed to have sunk on April 1, 1865. Legend that this **magnificent** steamboat held many treasures and was full of wealthy items captivated many people's attention and was spread throughout many **generations**. This is believed to be made up though, for nothing too valuable was found on the ship, but its all up to you to decide if it's truth or myth! Maybe you should check it out and create your own opinion!

The Bertrand was considered a "mountain boat," one of the larger boats on the Missouri river at the time, but by no means the largest. Researchers believe that this steamboat was built in Wheeling, West Virginia. The boat is reported to

have a value of about \$65,000. That's a lot! If you want to learn more about the Bertrand, be sure to visit the Bertrand exhibit at DeSoto National Wildlife Reserve. If you need directions to get there, look in the chapter about DeSoto.

GALLERY 1.8 Bertrand



This is a recreation of the Bertrand. It is now in the exhibit at DeSoto.



Fort Atkinson

You climb on the school bus for a short ride from Blair to Fort Calhoun to go to Fort Atkinson. Once you get there, you climb off the bus and go to a visitors center for about thirty minutes. From there, you go back outside into the cool fall air with the fresh smell all around you - **dew** on the grass, the sun just coming up over the horizon. You go with your class to a giant field with almost shoulder high grass, with the instructions to find the middle where the statue is. You take off through the field, running and giggling with all your friends. You see the statue over the grass and sprint towards it. You slip and fall, but get right back up, laughing too hard to keep running to the statue. That statue is actually of Lewis and Clark and their dog. You listen as your teacher talks about the statue, and then you move on throughout the barracks. Fort Atkinson is a very interesting place. You can see live **reenactments** of what life there would've been like for the soldiers living there during war. The barracks are in a L-shape, but not connected at the corner. At the corner, there is an opening. If you go

through that opening, there is a little wooden deck that overlooks the river. It's a spectacular view, especially in the morning. At Fort Atkinson, you can see people set off cannons, and other people march in formation near the barracks while one person plays a piccolo and another plays a snare drum. Doesn't that sound cool? If you think it does, and trust me, it is pretty cool to see, you should definitely consider a trip to Fort Atkinson State Park!

Click on the links below to see videos of reenactments at the Fort.

http://youtu.be/E_u2TMIFSsA

<http://youtu.be/ru6tmiklHA8>



Review!

REVIEW 1.1

Where would you find the Bertrand exhibit?

- A. Fort Atkinson
- B. Wilson Island State Park
- C. DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge
- D. Washington County Historical Museum

Check Answer

REVIEW 1.2

Where could you go to have a fun or scary night in the fall?

- A. Jackson's Buffalo Farm
- B. Dana College
- C. Blair Depot
- D. Skinny Bones

Check Answer

Credits

Sunset photo: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/therussiansarehere/3349867013/>

Museum photo: <http://www.wchamuseum.com>

Frahm House, Buffalo Farm, Alpacas, and DeSoto pictures were all personal photos.

Blair Depot photos: <http://www.blairhistory.com/landmarks/depot>
<http://www.schemmer.com/portfolio-item/blair-train-depot-renovation/>

Wilson Island: <http://www.iaparks.blogspot.com>

Lewis and Clark Historical Marker: [http://www.history.army.mil/LC/Explore/First Tribal Council/captions.htm](http://www.history.army.mil/LC/Explore/First_Tribal_Council/captions.htm)

Skinny Bones: <http://www.skinnybonespumpkinpatch.com/about>

Dana College:

1) <http://www.blairhistory.com/landmarks/dana/DAN0007.htm>

2) <http://www.blairhistory.com/landmarks/dana/DAN0024.htm>

3) <http://www.blairhistory.com/landmarks/dana/gallery.htm>

Fort Atkinson: <http://www.legendsofamerica.com/ne-fortatkinson.html>

Arboretum

a botanical garden devoted to trees.

from the Mac Dictionary App

Related Glossary Terms

Bicentennial

Index

Find Term

Bicentennial

200th year anniversary of a town or place, such as a park.

from the Mac Dictionary App

Related Glossary Terms

Arboretum

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Find Term

Bloodshed

the killing or wounding of people, typically on a large scale during a conflict.

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Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

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Find Term

Bluff

a steep cliff or bank

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Find Term

Chapter 1 - Lewis and Clark historical mark

Corn maze

a maze cut out of a corn field

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Find Term

Chapter 1 - Skinny Bones

Dew

tiny drops of water that form on cool surfaces at night

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Chapter 1 - Fort Atkinson

Fined

a sum of money exacted as a penalty by a court of law or other authority

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Chapter 1 - DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge

Generations

all of the people born and living at about the same time, regarded collectively

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Find Term

Chapter 1 - Bertrand

Hostile

unfriendly

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Magnificent

impressively beautiful, elaborate, or extravagant; striking

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Chapter 1 - Bertrand

Mallards

the most common duck of the northern hemisphere and the ancestor of most domestic ducks, the male having a dark green head and white collar

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Mercury

historically, this metal or one of its compounds was used medicinally (for medical purposes)

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Pelicans

a large waterbird with a long bill, an extensible throat pouch for scooping up fish, and mainly white or gray feathers

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Pintail

a mainly migratory duck with a pointed tail

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Chapter 1 - DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge

Plateau

an area of relatively level high ground

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Drag related terms here

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Find Term

Chapter 1 - Lewis and Clark historical mark

Post-mortem

after death

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Drag related terms here

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Find Term

Chapter 1 - DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge

Reenactments

act out a past event

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Drag related terms here

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Find Term

Chapter 1 - Fort Atkinson

Restored

bring back; reinstate

from the Mac Dictionary App

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

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Find Term

Chapter 1 - DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge

Sandbar

a long, narrow sandbank, especially at the mouth of a river.

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Related Glossary Terms

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Find Term

Souvenirs

a thing that is kept as a reminder of a person, place, or event

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Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

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Find Term

Chapter 1 - DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge

Steamboat

a boat that is propelled by a steam engine

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Find Term

Chapter 1 - Bertrand

Taxidermy

removing animal's internal organs after it dies and instead stuffing it so it looks realistic and life-like so it can be set out for viewing and doesn't rot

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Related Glossary Terms

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Find Term

Chapter 1 - DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge

Teal

a small freshwater duck, typically with a greenish band on the wing that is most prominent in flight

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Find Term

Chapter 1 - DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge

Wigeon

a dabbling duck with mainly reddish-brown and gray feathers, the male having a whistling call

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