



Smithsonian

National Museum of Natural History

Guide to the Christopher Cardozo collection of Edward S. Curtis papers and photographs

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National Anthropological Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Anthropological Archives
Title:	Christopher Cardozo Collection of Edward S. Curtis papers and photographs
Date:	circa 1899-1930
Identifier:	NAA.2022-12
Creator:	Curtis, Edward S., 1868-1952
Source:	Cardozo, Christopher
Extent:	12.5 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The collection comprises Edward S. Curtis original and copy negatives, prints, and photogravures relating to the Harriman Alaska Expedition and Curtis's 20 volume publication, the <i>North American Indian</i> (NAI), as well as ephemera and one gold-tone of Fort Lapawi.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The collection was donated to the National Anthropological Archives by Julie Cardozo in 2022.

Provenance

The archives of Edward S. Curtis are distributed throughout the holdings of multiple museums, archives, and libraries as well as those of private collectors (see Related Materials note). The negatives in this collection were originally part of the corpus of negatives held in the Curtis family (now held in the National Anthropological Archives). However, these were separated through unknown circumstances and purchased by Christopher Cardozo, who also collected the ephemera, Harriman Alaska Expedition albums, and other material through various sources.

Related Materials

The National Anthropological Archives holds additional Curtis papers and photographs in the [Edward S. Curtis papers and photographs](#) , , "MS 2000-18, the Edward Curtis investigation of the battle of Little Bighorn"

The Archives of Traditional Music at Indiana University holds Curtis's wax cylinder audio recordings from 1907-1913.

The Braun Research Library at the Autry Museum of the American West holds the Frederick Webb Hodge papers (1888-1931), which contain substantial correspondence from Curtis. The Braun also holds a small amount of Curtis papers and photographs, including some of Curtis's cyanotypes.

The Getty Research Institute holds the Edward S. Curtis papers (1900-1978), which include the original manuscript scores for the Curtis Picture Musicale and film *In the Land of the Headhunters*.

The Palace of the Governors at the New Mexico History Museum holds original Curtis negatives pertaining to the southwest.

The Pierpont Morgan Library holds the Edward S. Curtis papers (1906-1947), which contain the records of the North American Indian, Inc., as well as Curtis's correspondence to librarian, and later library director, Belle Da Costa Greene. The library also holds a large collection of Curtis's lantern slides, used in his *Picture Musicale*.

The Seattle Public Library holds correspondence of Curtis to Librarian Harriet Leitch (1948-1951), pertaining to his career.

The Seaver Center for Western History Research at the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History holds collection GC 1143, which contains Curtis's field notes as well as manuscript drafts for the *North American Indian*.

The Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian holds NMAI.AC.080, the Edward S. Curtis photogravure plates and proofs, as well as NMAI.AC.053, the Mary Harriman Rumsey collection of Harriman Alaska Expedition photographs.

The University of Washington Libraries Special Collections holds the Edward S. Curtis papers (1893-1983). Additionally, the Burke Museum holds papers and photographs of Edmund Schwinke, which relate to Curtis's work with the Kwakwaka'wakw community.

Restrictions

Viewing of the photographic negatives requires advance notice and the permission of the Photo Archivist.

Access to the collection requires an appointment.

Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

Biographical / Historical

Edward Sherriff Curtis (1868-1952) was an American photographer famous for his photographs of the indigenous peoples of North America. His work was highly influential in shaping a sympathetic yet romantic view of cultures that he and many others believed to be "vanishing." Over the course of 30 years, Curtis visited more than 80 Native American communities and published his photographs and ethnographies in the twenty-volume *North American Indian (NAI)* (1907-1930).

Curtis was born in Whitewater, Wisconsin, to Ellen and Johnson Curtis in 1868. In about 1874, his family moved to a farm in Cordova, Minnesota. At a young age, Curtis built a camera, and it is possible that he may have worked in a Minneapolis photography studio for a time. In 1887, Curtis and his father moved West and settled on a plot near what is now Port Orchard, Washington, with the rest of the family joining them the following year. When Johnson Curtis died within a month of the family's arrival, 20-year-old Curtis became the head of the family.

In 1891, Curtis moved to Seattle and bought into a photo studio with Rasmus Rothi. Less than a year later, he and Thomas Guptill formed "Curtis and Guptill, Photographers and Photoengravers." The endeavor became a premier portrait studio for Seattle society and found success in photoengraving for many local publications. In 1892, Curtis married Clara Phillips (1874-1932) and in 1893 their son Harold was born (1893-1988), followed by Elizabeth (Beth) (1896-1973), Florence (1899-1987) and Katherine (Billy) (1909-?). Around 1895, Curtis made his first photographs of local Native people, including the daughter of Duwamish chief Seattle: Kickisomlo or "Princess Angeline." Curtis submitted a series of his Native American photographs to the National Photographic Convention, and received an award in the category of "genre studies" for *Homeward* (later published in volume 9 of the *NAI*). In 1896, the entire Curtis family moved to Seattle, which included Curtis's mother, his siblings Eva and Asahel, Clara's sisters Susie and Nellie Phillips, and their cousin William Phillips. Most of the household worked in Curtis's studio along with other

employees. Curtis became sole proprietor of the studio in 1897, which remained a popular portrait studio but also sold his scenic landscapes and views of the Seattle Area. Curtis also sent his brother Asahel to Alaska and the Yukon to photograph the Klondike Gold Rush, and sold those views as well. Asahel went on to become a well-known photographer in his own right, primarily working in the American Northwest.

Curtis was an avid outdoorsman and joined the Mazamas Club after his first of many climbs of Mount Rainier. On a climb in 1898, Curtis evidently met a group of scientists, including C. Hart Merriam, George Bird Grinnell, and Gifford Pinchot, who had lost their way on the mountain, and led them to safety. This encounter led to an invitation from Merriam for Curtis to accompany a group of over 30 well-known scientists, naturalists, and artists as the official photographer on a maritime expedition to the Alaskan coast. Funded by railroad magnate Edward Harriman, the Harriman Alaska Expedition left Seattle in May of 1899, and returned at the end of July. Curtis made around 5000 photographs during the trip, including photographs of the indigenous peoples they met as well as views of mountains, glaciers, and other natural features. Many of the photographs appeared in the expedition's 14 published volumes of their findings.

In 1900, Curtis accompanied Grinnell to Montana for a Blackfoot Sundance. Here, Curtis made numerous photographs and became interested in the idea of a larger project to document the Native peoples of North America. Almost immediately upon returning from the Sundance, Curtis set off for the Southwest to photograph Puebloan communities. By 1904, Curtis had already held at least one exhibit of his "Indian pictures" and his project to "form a comprehensive and permanent record of all the important tribes of the United States and Alaska that still retain to a considerable degree their primitive customs and traditions" (General Introduction, the *NAI*) had taken shape and already received some press coverage. With his fieldwork now increasing his absences from home, Curtis hired Adolph Muhr, former assistant to Omaha photographer Frank Rinehart, to help manage the Seattle studio.

In 1904, Curtis was a winner in the *Ladies Home Journal* "Prettiest Children In America" portrait contest. His photograph of Marie Fischer was selected as one of 112 that would be published and Fischer was one of 12 children selected from the photographs who would have their portrait painted by Walter Russell. Russell and Curtis made an acquaintance while Russell was in Seattle to paint Fischer's portrait, and not long afterwards, Russell contacted Curtis to make photographic studies of Theodore Roosevelt's children for portraits he would paint. Curtis subsequently photographed the entire Roosevelt family, and developed a social connection with the President. Several important outcomes came of this new friendship, including Roosevelt eventually writing the foreword to the *NAI*, as well as making introductions to influential people.

Key among these introductions was one to wealthy financier John Pierpont Morgan, in 1906. After a brief meeting with Curtis during which he viewed several of Curtis's photographs of Native Americans, Morgan agreed to finance the fieldwork for the *NAI* project for five years, at \$15,000.00 per year. It was up to Curtis to cover publishing and promotion costs, with the publication being sold as a subscription. In return, Morgan would receive 25 sets of the 20-volume publication. The ambitious publication plan outlined 20 volumes of ethnological text, each to be illustrated with 75 photogravure prints made from acid-etched copper plates. Each volume would be accompanied by a companion portfolio of 35 large photogravures. With high-quality papers and fine binding, a set would cost \$3000.00. 500 sets were planned. Under Morgan, the North American Indian, Inc. formed as body to administer the monies. Also around this time, Frederick Webb Hodge, Director of the Smithsonian Institution's Bureau of American Ethnology, agreed to edit the publications.

Curtis then began more systematic fieldwork, accompanied by a team of research assistants and Native interpreters. In 1906, Curtis hired William E. Myers, a former journalist, as a field assistant and stenographer. Over the years, Myers became the lead researcher on the project, making enormous contributions in collecting data and possibly doing the bulk of the writing for the first 18 volumes. Upon meeting a new community, Curtis and his team would work on gathering data dealing with all aspects of the community's life, including language, social and political organization, religion, food ways, measures and values, and many other topics. (See box 2 folder 1 in this collection for Curtis's list of topics.) Curtis and his assistants, especially Myers, brought books and papers to the field relating to the tribes they were currently concerned with, and often wrote from the field to anthropologists at the Bureau of American Ethnology and other institutions for information or publications. In addition to fieldnotes and photographs, the team also employed sound recording equipment, making thousands of recordings on wax cylinders. Curtis also often brought a motion picture camera, although few of his films have survived.

The first volume of the *NAI* was published towards the end of 1907. Already, Curtis was encountering difficulty in finding subscribers to the publication despite great praise in the press and among those who could afford the volumes. Curtis spent progressively more of his time outside the field season promoting the project through lectures and in 1911, presenting his "Picture Musicale"—a lecture illustrated with lantern slides and accompanied by an original musical score—in major cities. After the initial five funded years, only eight of the twenty volumes had been completed. However, Morgan agreed to continue support for the fieldwork and publication continued.

Starting in 1910, Curtis and his team worked among the Kwakwaka'wakw First Nation on Vancouver Island, and in 1913 began to develop a documentary film project featuring the community in Alert Bay. In 1914, Curtis produced the feature-length film, *In the Land of the Headhunters*. The film showcased an all-indigenous cast and included an original musical score. Screened in New York and Seattle, it received high praise. However after this initial success, it did not receive the attention Curtis had hoped for, and resulted in financial loss.

Meanwhile, Curtis's prolonged absences from home had taken a toll on his marriage and in 1919 Clara and Edward divorced. The Seattle studio was awarded to Clara, and Curtis moved to Los Angeles, opening a photography studio with his daughter Beth and her husband Manford "Mag" Magnuson. Daughters Florence and Katherine came to Los Angeles sometime later. Curtis continued with fieldwork and promotion of the project, and in 1922 volume 12 of the *NAI* was published. Also in 1922, Curtis was accompanied during the field season in California by his daughter Florence Curtis Graybill, the first time a family member had gone to the field with him since the Curtis children were very small.

Curtis continued to push the project and publications along, yet never without financial struggle and he picked up work in Hollywood as both a still and motion picture photographer. John Pierpont Morgan, Jr., continued to provide funding for the fieldwork in memory of his father, but with the various financial upsets of the 1910s and 1920s, Curtis had a difficult time getting subscribers on board. In 1926, Myers, feeling the strain, regretfully resigned after the completion of volume 18. Anthropologist Frank Speck recommended Stewart Eastwood, a recent graduate from the University of Pennsylvania, to replace Myers as ethnologist for the final two volumes.

In 1927, Curtis and his team, along with his daughter Beth Curtis Magnuson, headed north from Seattle to Alaska and Canada on a final field season. Harsh weather and a hip injury made the trip difficult for Curtis, but he was very satisfied with the season's work. The party returned to Seattle, and upon arrival Curtis was arrested for unpaid alimony. He returned exhausted to Los Angeles, and in 1930 the final two volumes of *NAI* were published without fanfare. Curtis spent the next two years recovering from physical and mental exhaustion. Beth and Mag continued to run the Curtis studio in LA, but for the most part, Curtis had set down his camera for good. With the *NAI* behind him and his health recovered, Curtis pursued various interests and employment, eventually, settling down on a farm outside Los Angeles. he later moved in with Beth and Mag. Curtis died at home in 1952.

Sources Cited Davis, Barbara. *Edward S. Curtis: the life and times of a shadowcatcher*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1984. Gidley, Mick. *The North American Indian, Incorporated*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Biographical / Historical

Christopher Cardozo (1948-2021) was a major collector and dealer in Edward S. Curtis photography.

Scope and Contents

The Christopher Cardozo collection of Edward S. Curtis papers and photographs primarily relate to Curtis's opus, the *North American Indian*, and also the 1899 Harriman Alaska Expedition. Papers in the collection include promotional ephemera for the *NAI* as well as articles by Curtis and others. Photographic material includes original and copy negatives, prints, two Harriman Alaska Expedition souvenir albums, and one gold-tone of Fort Lapawi.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in two series: 1. Papers; and 2. Photographs and photogravures.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Acoma Pueblo
- Apache
- Apsáalooke (Crow/Absaroke)
- Assiniboine (Stoney)
- Coast Salish
- Diné (Navajo)
- Duwamish (Dwamish)
- Hopi Pueblo
- Hupa
- Jicarilla Apache
- Klamath
- Kootenai (Kutenai)
- Kwakwaka'wakw (Kwakiutl)
- Niitsitapii (Blackfoot/Blackfeet)
- Oglala Lakota (Oglala Sioux)
- Ohkay Owingeh (San Juan Pueblo)
- San Ildefonso Pueblo
- Sicangu Lakota (Brulé Sioux)
- Taos Pueblo
- Tsitsistas/Suhtai (Cheyenne)
- Wishram

Cultures:

- Acoma Pueblo
- Apache
- Apsáalooke (Crow/Absaroke)
- Assiniboine (Stoney)
- Coast Salish
- Diné (Navajo)
- Duwamish (Dwamish)
- Hopi Pueblo
- Hupa
- Jicarilla Apache
- Klamath
- Kootenai (Kutenai)
- Kwakwaka'wakw (Kwakiutl)
- Niitsitapii (Blackfoot/Blackfeet)
- Oglala Lakota (Oglala Sioux)
- Ohkay Owingeh (San Juan Pueblo)
- San Ildefonso Pueblo

Sicangu Lakota (Brulé Sioux)
Taos Pueblo
Tsitsistas/Suhtai (Cheyenne)
Wishram

Names:

Cardozo, Christopher
Harriman Alaska Expedition (1899)

Container Listing

Series 1: Papers

Scope and Contents: This series contains material related to the *North American Indian*, and includes promotional ephemera, several articles about and by Curtis, and documentation of the sale of *NAI* materials to Charles Lauriat.

Promotional material

Box 1, Folder 1	Brochure about the North American Indian from Curtis's Seattle studio with example photographs and pricing, undated
Box 1, Folder 2	Reviews , testimonials, and lecture notices relating to the North American Indian, 1905-1911
Box VOS2, Folder 4	Reviews and lecture notices, 1911, undated
Box VOS2, Folder 5	Promotional poster with image of men on horseback, undated
Box VOS2, Folder 6	Title pages for the North American Indian, 1907-1930

Articles, notes, and letter

Box 1, Folder 3	Articles "Portraits of Indian Types" in Scribner's Magazine by George Bird Grinnell, and "Hunting Indians with a Camera" in World's Work by Edmund Meany, 1905, 1908
Box 1, Folder 4	Copy of Scribner's Magazine with Curtis article "Indians of the Stone Houses", 1909
Box 1, Folder 5	Carbon copy of a letter from Charles Lauriat to "Mr. Brewer" at the Morgan Library and notes relating to sale of North American Indian materials, 1935

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Series 2: Photographs and photogravures

Scope and Contents: This series relates to both the Harriman Alaska Expedition (HAE), and the *North American Indian* (NAI). The HAE material includes two souvenir albums and several photogravures. The *NAI* material includes original and working copy glass and nitrate negatives, and one gold tone of Fort Lapwai.

Harriman Alaska Expedition

Scope and Contents: The Harriman Alaska Expedition sub-series comprises two souvenir albums.

Box 2	Harriman Alaska Expedition souvenir album, volume 1, "New York to Cook Inlet", 1899 1 Photograph album 134 Photographic prints
Box 3	Harriman Alaska Expedition souvenir album, volume 2, "Cook Inlet to Bering Strait and the Return Voyage", 1899 1 Photograph album 107 Photographic prints
Box VOS2, Folder 7	Photogravures of Harvard Glacier, Serpentine Glacier, and Fossil Forest at Glacier Bay, 1899 3 Photomechanical prints (photogravure)

North American Indian

Box 4 99235: Goldtone of Fort Lapwai showing gathering in center of large circle of tipis
1 Transparency (unframed Goldtone)

Volume 1

Box G1	x984: Group of riders (Diné/Navajo) on horseback. Published as the Vanishing Race, undated 1 Glass negative (copy negative)
Box G1	x989: Man (Diné/Navajo). Published as Chief of the Desert 1 Glass negative (copy negative)
Box G1	x1013: Riders on horseback in Canyon de Chelly. Published as Canyon de Chelly 1 Glass negative (copy negative)
Box G1	x1048: Weaver (Diné/Navajo) at loom. Published as the Blanket Weaver 1 Glass negative (original negative)
Box G1	x1244: Vash Gon (Jicarilla Apache). Published as Vash Gon

1 Glass negative (copy negative)

Box G1 x1869: Man (Apache) standing near water's edge. Published as the Apache
1 Glass negative (original negative)

Box G2 x1084: Young man (Diné/Navajo). Published as Son of the Desert
1 Glass negative (original negative)

Box G2 x1883: Woman (Apache) reaping grain. Published as Apache Reaper
1 Glass negative (copy negative)

Box G2 x1920: Group of riders (Apache) on horseback. Published as the Storm
1 Glass negative (original negative)

Volume 3

Box G2 x1469: Riders (Oglala Lakota) on horseback in Badlands. Published as In the
Badlands
1 Glass negative (copy negative)

Box G2 x2485: Woman (Sicangu Lakota/Brulé Sioux) carrying firewood. Published as A
Heavy Load
1 Glass negative (original negative)

Box G2 x2447: Black Eagle (Assiniboine) wrapped in hide and holding feathered fan.
Published as Black Eagle
1 Glass negative (copy negative)

Box G3 x2507: Man (Oglala Lakota) kneeling next to buffalo or cow skull and holding
pipe. Published as Prayer to the Great Mystery
1 Glass negative (original negative)
1 Glass negative (copy negative)

Box G3 x2568: Men (Oglala Lakota) on horseback near tipi. Published as Sioux Camp
1 Glass negative (original negative)

Volume 4

Box G3 x1315: Riders on horseback along wooded path. Published as A Mountain
Fastness
1 Glass negative (copy negative)

Box G3 x1288: Alexander Upshaw (Apsáalooke/Crow) squatting next to stream.
Published as Day Dreams
1 Glass negative (original negative)

Box G3 x1289: Alexander Upshaw (Apsáalooke/Crow). Published as Upshaw--
Apsaroke

1 Glass negative (original negative)

Box G4 x2703: Medicine Crow (Apsáalooke/Crow). Published as Medicine Crow
1 Glass negative (copy negative)

Box G4 x2644: Two Leggings (Apsáalooke/Crow). Published as Two Leggings--
Apsaroke
1 Glass negative (original negative)

Box G4 x2627: Three men (Apsáalooke/Crow) standing next to buffalo or cow skull with
one man pointing skyward with arrow. Published as the Oath
1 Glass negative (original negative)

Box G4 x2771: Woman (Apsáalooke/Crow) carrying firewood next to tipi in snowy
wooded area. Published as Winter--Apsaroke
1 Glass negative (copy negative)

Volume 7

Box G8 x3152: People (Salish/Flathead) gathered in camp near tipis. Published as
Flathead Camp on the Jocko River
1 Glass negative (original negative)

Box G4 x3185: Man or woman (Kootenai) in canoe among rushes. Published as the
Rush Gatherer--Kutenai
1 Glass negative (original negative)

Volume 8

Box G4 x3030: Man (Wishram) dip netting in river. Published as the Fisherman--
Wishram
1 Glass negative (original negative)

Volume 9

Box G5 x851: Family in canoe (Duwamish) on Puget Sound. Published as Homeward
1 Glass negative (copy negative)

Box N1 CGC97939: Man (Quilcene)
1 Nitrate negative (original negative)

Volume 10

Box G5 x3521: Wedding party group (Kwakwaka'wakw) on canoes at shore. Published
as the Wedding Party--Qa'gyuhl
1 Glass negative (copy negative)

Box G5 x3526: Wedding party group (Kwakwaka'wakw) in canoe at shore.

1 Glass negative (original negative)

Box G5 x3535: Yakotlus (Kwakwaka'wakw). Published as Yakotlus--Quatsino
1 Glass negative (original negative)

Box N1 B20: Houses at Alert Bay (Kwakwaka'wakw).
1 Nitrate negative (original negative)

Volume 12

Box G5 x1962: Nampeyo (Hopi Pueblo) decorating a pot. Published as the Potter
1 Glass negative (original negative)

Box G5 x2112: Man (Hopi Pueblo) standing and holding sticks. Published as A Hopi
Snake Priest

Box N1 CGC97934: Man (Hopi Pueblo) kneeling next to pool and placing prayer stick
next to boulder. Published as Depositing a Prayer Stick
1 Nitrate negative (original negative)

Volume 13

Box G6 x3901: Man (Klamath) standing on hill overlooking Crater Lake
2 Glass negatives (copy negatives)

Box G6 x3030B: Man (Hupa) with spear standing next to stream. Published as
Watching for Salmon--Hupa
1 Glass negative (copy negative)

Box G6 x3837: Man (Hupa) with spear sitting next to stream. Published as Spearing
Salmon--Hupa
1 Glass negative (copy negative)

Volume 15

Box N1 x4135: Man standing at edge of Walker Lake holding long stick. Published as
Shores of Walker Lake
1 Nitrate negative (original negative)

Volume 16

Box G6 x1194: People gathered for feast in plaza at Acoma. Published as A Feast Day
at Acoma
1 Glass negative (original negative)

Box G6 x1666: Two women (Taos Pueblo) on path in woods carrying water jars on
head. Published as Taos Water Girls

1 Glass negative (original negative)

Box G7 x1702: Pelican Bird (Acoma Pueblo) wearing hat
1 Glass negative (original negative)

Box G7 x1703: Pelican Bird (Acoma Pueblo)
1 Glass negative (original negative)

Volume 17

Box G7 x1711: Povi-Tamu (San Ildefonso Pueblo) with jar on head. Published as Girl
and Jar
1 Glass negative (original negative)

Box G7 x1742: Yan-tsire, or Willow Bird (San Ildefonso Pueblo)
1 Glass negative (original negative)

Box G7 x1759: Peen-tay-poba, or Mountain Stick Flower (San Juan Pueblo)
1 Glass negative (original negative)

Box G7 x1774: Group of women (San Juan Pueblo) with pots at edge of river.
Published as San Juan Water Carriers
1 Glass negative (original negative)

Box G8 x1775: Governor of San Juan Pueblo
1 Glass negative (original negative)

Box G8 x1778: Woman (San Juan Pueblo) winnowing wheat
1 Glass negative (original negative)

Box N1 CGC97940: Man (San Ildefonso Pueblo) standing on weathered rock outcrop
with one arm outstretched in offering. Published as the Offering--San Ildefonso
1 Nitrate negative (original negative)

Volume 18

Box N1 CGC97926: Man (Niitsitapii/Blackfoot) on horse at Bow River. Published as
Bow River--Blackfoot
1 Nitrate negative (original negative)

Box N1 CGC97932: Small child (Assiniboine) on horseback next to painted tipi.
Published as A Painted Tipi
1 Nitrate negative (original negative)

Volume 19

Box N1 CGC97933: Man (possibly Tsistsistas/Suhtai/Cheyenne) kneeling and playing
drum. Published as Peyote Drummer

1 Nitrate negative (original negative)

Photographs for Flute of the Gods by Marah Ellis Ryan

Box G8;

Box N1

R10: Man standing on rock and reaching towards night sky. Published as
Prayer to the Stars

1 Glass negative (copy negative)

1 Nitrate negative (copy negative)

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