

THE

# CHRONICLE

## QUARTERLY

Price \$2.00

Vol. 7, No. 1

March 1988

Published By The  
Weston Historical Society

### THE EDITOR'S EDGE

Our two main articles in this issue remind us that 'the good old days' were not always that good. Many diseases that people died of in bygone days are now known by other names and in many cases are preventable and/or curable. A hundred years (or less) from now better cures or preventable medicines will make present medicines seem like the good old days.

Snow and blizzards are another thing. Mother Nature can and has stopped the best of man's machines. Maybe for not as long as in the past, but until we can make snow vaporize before our eyes, it will be a traveling hazzard; from here to the corner, or to wherever you want to go — and can't get there.

Historical Societies can gather dust and become stagnant if they don't open their doors and let the sunshine and people in — often. We plan to do the latter and our schedule of special events is a great start. We will also be open on a regular basis, to be announced later when the schedule is set.

Herb Day - Editor

## WESTON'S HISTORICAL NOTEBOOK

### THE GREAT BLIZZARD — RIGHT HERE IN WESTON!!

Well, it was all over the East coast, from the Washington area up to Maine. And it probably was not the most snow this area received in one snow storm, but it was close to being a record. However, what made it such a fierce storm were the winds and the resulting massive drifts, some as high as 20 feet. The total actual accumulation was between three and four feet, but was hard to measure because of the continual drifting. It was truly a blizzard! But you don't have to take my word for it, (I wasn't there) because we have eye-witness accounts from several newspapers in Fairfield County and comments from the Weston 'outlivers', given to us by their descendents.

We do not have any photographs of Weston during the great blizzard but I guess you would expect this since most photographs in those days were taken by professional photographers and they probably could not get to Weston for a few weeks with their equipment. If there are any pictures, they have not surfaced yet.

The following comments start with the newspaper stories of what things were like in surrounding towns, then several comments by Weston's own, including excerpts from a journal.

Bridgeport Standard Bridgeport 3/14/88.

'Everybody is of the same opinion today: they never saw such a storm in all their lives and they meant it too. Bakery, brewery and milk wagons had the right-of-way. Dr. Ward, President of Yankton College, Dakota said, while stranded in Bridgeport, "It only needed more cold on it to equal the genuine Dakota article."

Bridgeport 3/16/88.

None of the roads were broken thru until yesterday (four days after the storm.)

The oldest residents can not recollect such a fearful, storm as we have just passed through.

It is called a Dakota blizzard. If this is the way she is knocking at Uncle Sam's door to be admitted (to the union), do let her in. (on Jan. 16, 1888 a severe storm raged in Dakota, temperatures dropped to 30° below and 100 people lost their lives).

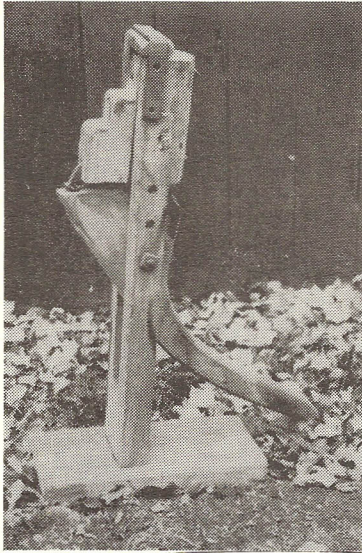
Norwalk Gazette Wed. Mar. 14, 1888

'Lean' Sherwood was found in the snow by the police nearly frozen to death last Monday night. He was taken to Wendling's bake shop where Dutch George packed him in a barrel of snow to take the frost out and rolled the barrel and all into his oven to take the snow out. Lean came out alright. Stage driver Gregory of the Weston stage route had an experience in get-



# PICTURE QUIZ

CAN YOU NAME THIS?



If you can name the item in the picture, send your answer and your name to:

The Editor  
The Chronicle Quarterly  
P.O. Box 1092  
Weston, CT 06883

The item in the last picture quiz is an apple grinder. It was placed over a cider press, the apples were placed in the grinder, and ground-up apples were dropped down into the cider press. There is a recent addition to the Barn Museum (1987).

**THE CHRONICLE QUARTERLY**  
PUBLISHED BY THE  
WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P.O. BOX 1092  
WESTON, CT 06883

## CURRENT EVENTS 1988 PROGRAM SCHEDULE

The majority of the Coley House redecorating project was finished in December, 1987 in preparation for 'A Christmas at the Coley House', which was a three day open house to show off the great work that the Women's clubs of Weston accomplished in redecorating the first floor of this house. We hope many of you were able to attend. With these redecorated rooms available for use, we are able to schedule some activities for the rest of the year:

**March 10th thru March 13th.** A TOY AND DOLL EXHIBIT. We will use the theme of "THINGS OF CHILDHOOD" covering two periods. The first period will be the late 1800's and the second period will be from 1900-1940. We will use items which already belong to the Society and also items lent to us by friends and members of the Society. This event will have taken place by the time that the Chronicle is printed.

**April 21.** On this Thursday in April, the Society will host a luncheon and tour for the Norfield Women's Fellowship.

**April 24.** In April, which is our membership drive and dues month, we will hold a Wine and Cheese party for all members and their guests. This event will take place at the Coley House and on the grounds of the Homestead, weather permitting. We hope to encourage every member to bring in a new member that month and thereby try to double our membership and get much needed financial support as well as new workers to help accomplish all that needs to be done to be a viable and visible organization, dedicated to 'Preserving the Past for the Benefit of the Future'. This Wine and Cheese party will be on Sunday, April 24 from 4 to 6 pm.

**May.** Your Society will play host to the Newcomer's Club with a bus tour of Weston, a picnic and a tour of the Coley Homestead.

**July.** The date has not been set yet, but we will again be hosts to the Senior Citizens of Weston with a cookout, and a tour of the homestead and perhaps some outdoor demonstrations and exhibits.

**Fall.** A Quilt show and sale is planned with food being served for sale, as well as opportunities to tour the House and Barn. The Quilts will be old as well as new, and hopefully, a demonstration of Quilting.

**December.** We are planning our second annual 'Christmas at the Coley House', similar to the successful one this past December.

A letter to all members was sent out last month outlining these tentative plans with a tear-sheet listing the help we so vitally need. If your response is not yet in, please take the time to do it now or call one of the Trustees. WE DO NEED EVERYONE TO HELP IN SOME WAY.

## THE WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY TRUSTEES FOR 1988

Lou Bregy  
Herb Day  
Marie Golden  
Linda Guidera  
Ethel Keene  
Evelyn Kerin  
Linda Martin  
Gene O'Hare

MaryLou Perry  
Gary Samuelson  
Dan Sanders  
Peggy Sanford  
Marge Schneider  
Joe Spetly  
Nadine Tichy



**IN CASE YOU'VE FORGOTTEN  
"THE OUTLIVERS"**



The charming video starring Christopher Plummer and many of your friends and neighbors is still available at the Town Hall. A light hearted, but accurate view of Weston's history. 30 minutes — \$30. Don't miss this keepsake of the Bicentennial Year.

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

The following letter came in to the Editor in response to the last issue of the Chronicle.

1. In your December Chronicle you had the Norfield corners. On the one corner where there wasn't a house you said the land was probably owned by the Banks family. That land was owned by Charles Broch. Florence Banks bought the land for her new house in the 40's. (I) Was very interested in seeing the house that was on the corner where Willis Banks built his house, as Willis was my uncle and I had never seen a picture of the house he took down. Liked your article of the Banks 50th anniversary, as they were my grandparents and I remember the party. I am Natalie, one of the grandchildren that attended. Rita and I live here in Killingworth and Anna lives in Branford. I enjoy the Chronicle so very much. Although I moved away from Weston 47 years ago, it holds a dear place in my memory.  
Natalie Corsa Endean

The other letters, which were comments on the projections on the future of Weston made by one of our anonymous contributors, will be printed in the next issue, because of lack of room in this issue.

**OLD TIME DISEASES**

From church records contributed by Rodney Merwin as recorded by pastors of the Trinity Church of Southport and the Greenfield Hill Congregational Church.

- |      |   |      |  |
|------|---|------|--|
| 1786 | Hannah Dascomb, old age<br>Hannah Bangs, a child with worm<br>The wife of James Knapp, putrid fever<br>Hezekiah Bulkley, consumption  |      |  |
| 1790 | Jonathan Bulkley, gout in the stomach<br>Olive Kirtland, nervous fever<br>Capt. Peter Whitney, black jaundice   | 1795 | Sally Hinman, camp distemper, 18 months old<br>Charity Burr, dysentery, 28<br>Rebecca Burr, dysentery, 30; sisters<br>Philo Burr, dysentery, 13<br>Wife of David Jinnings, 40 years, suddenly<br>Wife of Jonathan Coley, aged 77, old age<br>Anna, wife to Peter Bulkley, numb palsy<br>Anna, wife to William Nichols, in childbed<br>Joseph Beers, gravel, 83 years old<br>Obediah Whelar, scarlet fever, aged 7 years<br>Abigail Whelar, dropsy, 61 years<br>Polly, wife to Lazarus Beach, in childbed, 35 years<br>Rowland Roberts, an infant, whooping cough |
| 1792 | Capt. Hezekiah Sturges, apoplectic fit<br>John Sherwood, consumption<br>Widow Margaret Lacy, dropsey<br>Adria Allen, an infant, bladder in the throat<br>Ned, a Negro, dropsy | 1796 | Shelton Edwards, murdered, 15 years old<br>Mary Mills, 55 years, slow fever  |
| 1793 | Abigail Sherwood, small pox<br>Increase Burr, wenn in the throat  | 1794 | Susannah Burr, 4 years, dropsy in the head<br>Susannah Burr, mother to the above, aged 25, consumption   |
| 1794 | David Robertson, scarlet fever<br>Samuel Robertson, lingering complaints<br>William Edward Nichols, an infant, teething   |      |  |



## POST OFFICE UPDATE

Last Spring, Weston Historical Society, in conjunction with the Town of Weston, had a most successful opening day at the old Weston P.O. and General Store. One of our fund raisers for the restoration project was the sale of the front post office boxes. Now we will be selling the rear boxes. There are 54 slots and instead of putting the donors name on the slots, we will put all 54 names on one large brass plaque on the oak panel out next to the front boxes. The boxes will be sold for \$50 or more on the first come, first served basis. Now, and in the future, all monies generated will go into the Adams-Scribner Museum Fund which will go towards any restoration for the barn and the post office. Since the Historical Society is maintaining the Post Office and the Barn, we are asking all those who wish to buy a rear box to send their donation to Weston Historical Society, P.O. Box 1092, Weston, Ct. 06883. Please make your check out to the Adams-Scribner Museum Fund.

The barn has just been reroofed. Additional work on the foundation and the floor will be done as funds permit.

Both the Adams-Scribner Museum and the Coley Homestead Museum will be open during the summer months. We will announce the days and times in the local papers and in the next Chronicle.

## WISH LIST

Every Non-profit organization has a list of things that it needs which are acquired by saving for them, by grants, and by gifts of the items needed. We will be printing our Wish List in the next Chronicle. One item on our list has been obtained. In December we received a \$1000 grant from the IBM Corporation to buy a computer. This was made possible by Mr. Bill Bowles, a V.P. with IBM. (Sylvia Bowles was a Trustee of the Society until they moved to North Carolina). We did buy an IBM computer and some of our workers are now learning how to use this valuable tool for our museum. We will be using it for our membership lists, for cataloging our many items in the museum, and for old house and geneology records.

## CONTRIBUTING TO THIS ISSUE:

Linda Martin  
Ruth Lockwood  
Rodney Merwin  
Ray Fitch  
Helen Budd Mason  
Dave Coley

## DUES ARE DUE

Your 1988 Dues are due now. We appreciate your support. The monies received from members goes to pay for the printing of the Chronicle and to pay for some of the upkeep for the Coley House. Since the costs of both are going up, if you can upgrade your membership one level, we will be forever grateful.

A membership renewal form will be sent to you. If you have a friend who should be a member, please give them the form printed below, or tell them to send their check to us with the level of membership desired. Thank you.

## NEW MEMBERS

We take this opportunity to welcome the following new members to the Society:

Mr. & Mrs. Ted White  
Mr. & Mrs. Dan Suratt  
Mr. & Mrs. Ned Frey  
Mr. & Mrs. Horace Shipman of Killingsworth, Ct.  
Mr. & Mrs. Wray Jones

## WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP DUES

Youth . . . . .	\$ 2.00	Sustaining . . . . .	\$ 50.00
Senior . . . . .	\$ 5.00	Contributing . . .	\$100.00
General . . . . .	\$15.00	Life . . . . .	\$500.00

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

New membership \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Dues are for the period April 1 through March 31.

## IN THE NEXT ISSUE

OLD PICTURES

PICTURE QUIZ

CURRENT EVENTS

MUSEUM HOURS

WESTONS HISTORICAL NOTE BOOK



ting home Monday night which he doesn't care to see again. He was obliged to frequent intervals along the dreary and lonesome road to shovel a pathway for his team through high drifts, in the teeth of the blinding storm and it is a miracle that he survived the strain. On Wall Street (in Norwalk) snow obscured the first floor stores and was up to the second floor windows. The train was stuck and some cars were off the track. Telephone service was disrupted.

Norwalk Gazette Wed. Mar. 21, 1888

"We never had anything like this during 25 years of Republican administration, and it simply shows how utterly incapable the Democrats are to run this country. We must have a change."

Selectman Wheeler, Norwalk

Evening Sentinel — South Norwalk

Mar. 13, 1888 — Mr. Nash, the iceman, who lives near the fair grounds and one of Norwalk's old settlers, said yesterday that the storm reminded him of the storm that took place 34 years ago (1854), when the snow fell continually for ten days.

Mar. 14, 1888 — The mail carrier from Weston drove to Norwalk Monday and has not been able to go back to Weston yet.

Southport 3/16/88 — The packet vessels will not leave until next week as no produce can be put aboard until then (probably because the produce could not be brought to the port).

The Fairfield Advertiser March 28, 1888

It tried to snow a little yesterday, but despite the memory of the blizzard, we failed to get alarmed.

Elbridge C. Jennings of Wilton brought the first New York, New Haven, and Hartford train into the South Norwalk station after the blizzard, on March 15, 1888.

#### AND IN WESTON —

Helen Mason sent the following:

"My grandmother, Helen Elizabeth Fitch Sturges kept a journal from the time she was married in 1870 until her five children were grown up and until she had a couple of grandchildren — James Coley, my brother Ed, and me. The following excerpts are from her journal. March 11, 1888 — a very unpleasant day, snowing a little and a very high, cold wind blowing . . . raining and snowing in the evening.

March 12, 1888 — Monday — snowing and blowing, and the snow beginning to fill up east of the house. At noon, it was impossible to reach the woodpile, so we had to go into the cellar and get old pieces of a bin to burn. At 2 o'clock John and Sammie started for the red barn, to tend the oxen and calves, but the storm was raging so they had to come back. They managed to reach the cow barn by going around the wash house. All night the wind and storm kept up a continuous howl, and it was very cold.

March 13, 1888 — Tuesday — This morning the thermometer stood at 12 above at 10 a.m. We did not get

up early as we were so short of wood. John and Sammie, by going around the east lot reached the red barn, found the calves standing by the oxen and the four looking as if they were forsaken. They managed to put the oxen in the horse stables and dug a path to the cow barn for the calves. Now all are under cover except three turkeys. It did not storm again till 3 o'clock in the afternoon but the wind did not stop until 8 in the evening. The windows in the one room where we had a fire were so covered with ice and snow we could not see out, and one south door was the only door we could get out and the snow in front of that is five ft. high — something of a step.

March 14, Wednesday. Rose at 8. Wind quiet and not very cold. At nine it commenced snowing and kept it up till 2 in the afternoon, when the sun shone forth in all its glory, but what did we see but heaps of snow piled everywhere it could find someplace to lean against. The roads will have to be dug out. Up until now we have plenty to eat, but will be short of provisions in a few days unless we can get to the station (Cannon). Wednesday night — weather mild.

March 15. Thursday — Sun very bright and warm, but the wind cold. John and Sammie went to the station (C.T. Gregory store and P.O.) No trains running until Monday morning. Snow melting fast, but the chicken yard is full and the banks are so high that if you go up on a snow bank you can easily reach the tops of the highest pear trees. The children think it is great sport.

April 1, Sunday — Easter Sunday. No one to church but Mable (her daughter) from this house. It is a fine day and we would be glad to go but can't walk and I doubt if we could ride if we had a horse — over the banks of snow. Yesterday, Mr. Sterling drove by, the first team that has passed here since March 12. We have a horse in New York that Uncle Fred (Dr. Frederick Dennis Sturges, Helen Mason's great uncle) has bought for us and hope to get him (or it) here this week. How fine to have a horse again.

Yesterday Mr. Sterling got for me from Mr. J. Templeton, South Wilton, a rag carpet that he has been weaving for me. I sewed 51 lbs. rags in two months; it made 27½ yds of carpet. Cost of weaving — \$6.32.

Helen Mason, who sent these excerpts to us, also said 'my father, then 19, remembered that it was extremely cold, the country roads were filled in with snow from fence top to fence top, and a tunnel was shoveled from the house to the barn to feed the cattle and horses, and to the woodshed for firewood'.

Ray Fitch sent us the following: My dad told us that they went out the second story window after the blizzard of 1888. He said that they had to tunnel to get into the barn to take care of the animals. He said that the amount of snow was not so great but that the wind blew it in great drifts. He often said that we had more snow on the level (since) then in the blizzard.

Dave Coley said that during the blizzard of 1934 much

(continued on page 6)



(continued from page 5)

was said about the two storms and those that seemed to know said that '88 had the edge by quite a margin.

Ruth Lockwood said 'My father was ten years old when the blizzard of March 1888 hit Weston. Drifts reached to the second story windows of the house on Georgetown Road. He and his brothers were sliding on snowbanks in June. A tunnel has to be dug to the barn in order to care for the livestock. Fortunately, there was a well inside the barn.

Mrs. Lillian Morton said on the oral tape she did with Hamilton Basso on March 24, 1956 (she was 72 years old) that it snowed three days. It would stop and crust over and then snow some more. The drifts where Godfrey Street-East curves away from Tubbs Springs Road were as high as the maple trees, about twenty feet. When the men were shoveling out the road, she remembered seeing them up in those maple limbs. It was a week before they cleared down to the main road (Newtown Turnpike). Nobody could get to the store or post office until finally somebody got through with a sled and oxen and brought back the mail. Then she remembered her father reading about the snowstorm aloud to her mother. It took him two days to get to the barn. The cattle were thirsty, otherwise they were all right. Her brother was a baby and her mother has to wash so she would open the window on the enclosed porch and scoop snow in a clothes boiler and melt it on the stove. The other children used to watch it go down as it melted and then she would have to add some more.

Mrs. Frederick Banks. Mrs. Banks told Miss Grace Robinson in 1936 that a Mr. Smith (Mrs. Hawley Williams' grandfather) died during the blizzard. They couldn't get an undertaker, the roads were terrible. They had to cut a way. They took him down to the cemetery hauled by two yoke of oxen. Just took him as he was. Mr. Johnson built a box for him. Later, Mrs. Banks said, after traveling became easier, they held a service in the church and a minister came and preached a funeral for Mr. Smith.

Rodney Merwin, one of the contributors to the Chronicle (this issue), told us that his mother said it was like a nice spring day the day before the storm. Rodney also sent an article from the March 12, 1986 Westport News about the blizzard of '88. (Well, it was only the 98th anniversary. I guess that's close enough when you are looking for copy).

Based on all we have read and heard, it was a blizzard of immense proportions, for the East coast. If it were to happen again, this year, we would be physically stranded by the drifts, as the people were in 1888. The difference would be that we would be in touch with the world with our radios and TV and present day snow removal equipment would be able to remove the drifts in a matter of hours or days, rather than weeks. We hope.

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## FIFTY YEARS (OR SO) AGO WESTPORTER—HERALD MARCH 19, 1903

The Oberlin student who was advertised to preach at Norfield church last Sunday, failed to appear, and Mr. McCandless preached and gave notice that there would be services next Sabbath at the usual hour.

Two boys in Weston thought they would take an automobile ride, or rather, a substitute. One of the boys took his father's buggy, tied the shafts to the dashboard and looked to see if everything was clear and another boy to watch, they mounted at the top of a large, quite steep hill and descended, and we are surprised to say

that they landed safely at the bottom of the hill.

While prize fighting is forbidden by law as being brutal and dangerous, it is still participated in to a great extent. Statistics show that in the year 1902 only two were killed while indulging in this kind of sport, while on the other hand, twenty-one men were killed while playing the legalized game of football during the past season of three short months. Football maybe a manly sport in the eyes of some, but it has it's drawbacks.



(continued from page 3)

	Lois Burr, in childbed sickness, 21 years		Caroline Blackman, aged 6 years, hiccough
	Ebenezer Allen, 11 years, accidental death	1810	Jenny, a black woman, 23 years, consumption
	William Holbertson, scirrhus liver, 57 years		Job Lockwood, Norfield, inflammation on the brain, aged 47 years
1798	George Hinman, an infant, inflammation of the bowels	1812	Elnathan Seeley, aged 70, dysentery
	James Knapp, Plurisey, 57 years old		Nathaniel Tredwell, aged 40, pulmonic complaint
	Mercy Ells, mumps, 5 months old	1813	Jonathan Beers, aged 54 years, epidemic
	Lucy Sherwood, canker, 4 years old		Aaron Beers, aged 54 years, epidemic
	Anna Cascomb, in a fit, 64 years		
	A child of Miles Greenfield, burned, 3 years	1814	Aaron Burr Bradley, intemperance
	Tabatha Waklee, burned to death, 91 years		Ruth, wife of Nathan Perry, Peripneumona asthma, age 56
1800	Nathaniel Porter, Mortification in the bowels for a sudden cold, 13 Ephraim Nichols, mortification in the bowels from eating currants, 10	1815	Eunice, daughter of Elisha Bradley, punking, age 39
1801	Lois Gilbert, 73, cancerous in arm and breast		Widow Sarah Redfield, dropsy in chest, age 70
1803	Samuel Osborn, aged 45, hemporrhage	1816	Widow Esther Mitchel, decay
	Samuel Baker, aged 85, cramp in the stomach		Amelia, wife of Lyman Hull, asthma, age 34
	Samuel Cable, an infant, 6 months old, rickets	1817	Andrew, son of Eben. Burr Jr., diabetes, age 11
1804	James Hoty, aged 38, affection of the lungs	1818	John Strattan, old age and flux, age 89
	Seth Sturtes, aged 68, pneumonia		Elias, black, fracture of the leg
	Sarah Jackson, aged 15 years, billious fever		Daughter of Prince Price, black, ulcers, age 9 months
	Munson Bangs, 9 years old, colic		Priscilla, daughter of Abraham Hubbell, cholera infantum, 9 months
	Poly Hubble, childbed sickness, aged 29	1820	Morris, son of Wakeman Wilson, convulsions, age 5
1806	Reuben Beers, aged 66, inebriation		Sturges, son of John Banks, an idiot, age 19
	Sanuel Cable, aged 73 years, felon	1821	Lewis, son of Rowland Burr, scalded to death, age 1
1808	Samuel Brinsmade, cronicle, aged 59		Hull Murwin, effect of wound by cart wheel
			Isaac Webb, liver inflammation, age 70

Aren't we lucky to be living in an age of vaccines, antibiotics, X-rays, disinfectants and all the other health aids available today!

---

## A BERKSHIRE LAD

When winter winds in Weston  
Blow Boreasly chill,  
and niveous in South Norwalk,  
and cold in Kellogg hill;

When the Saugatuck is frozen,  
and the logs are large in grates,  
When Lyons Plains lads and lasses  
Fly featly on the stakes;

When mercury's at zero  
and possibly more down,  
call I the snowy country  
to say I'll stay in Town.

Franklin P. Adams

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MR & MRS ROBERT ATKINSON  
12 LORDS HIGHWAY EAST  
WESTON CT 06883

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QUARTERLY

A PUBLICATION OF THE WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
FOUNDED IN 1961

MARCH 1988

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY WESTON

### IN THIS ISSUE

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