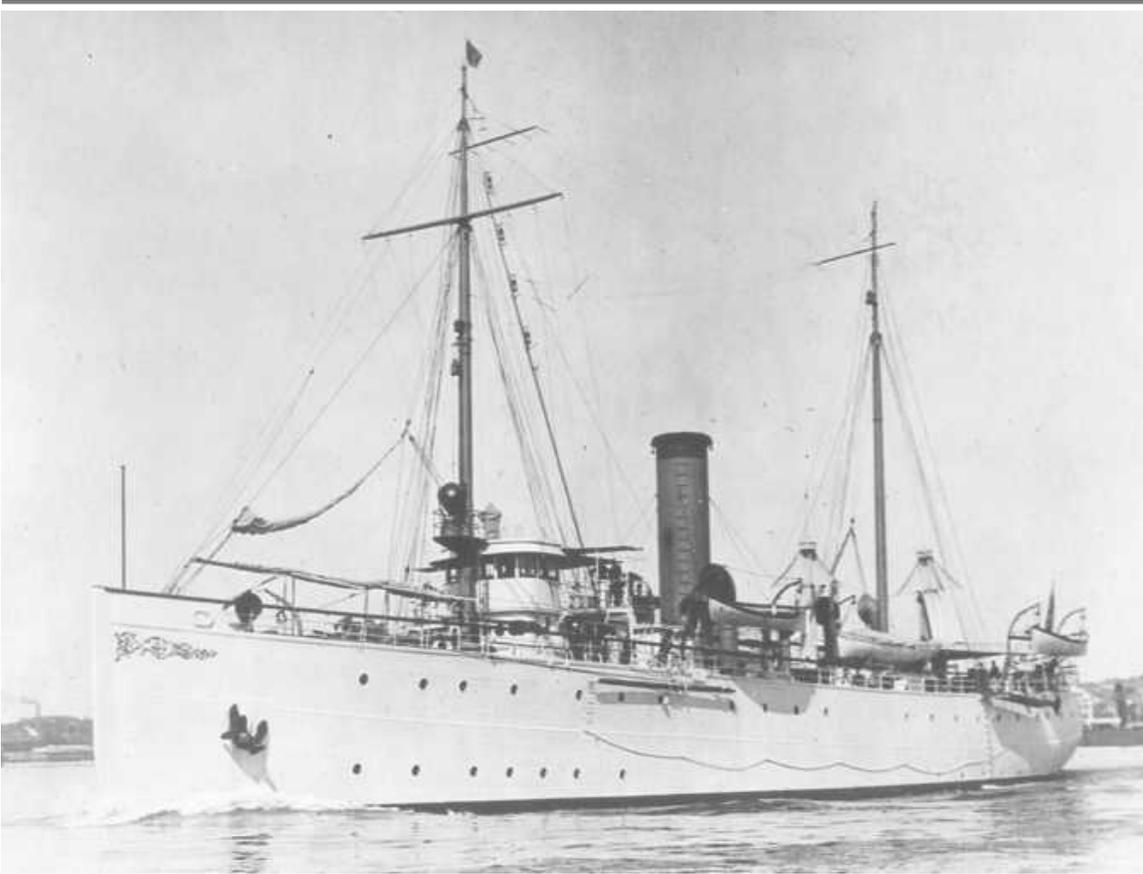


## ***Androscoggin, 1908***



A river formed on the Maine-New Hampshire border by the confluence of the Magalloway River and a short outlet of Umbagog Lake. A county in Maine also carries the name Androscoggin which in turn is derived from the name of an Indian tribe which lived on the banks of the river. The word Androscoggin is an Indian term meaning "fishing place for alewives" or "spear fishing."

Builder: Rodermond Bros., Tompkins Cove, NY; Pusey & Jones, Wilmington, DE

Length: 210'

Beam: 36'

Draft: 17' 6"

Displacement: 1,200 tons

Cost: \$250,087

Commissioned: 8 July 1908

Decommissioned: 26 August 1921

Disposition: Sold

Machinery: Triple-expansion steam engine; 1,800 SHP

Performance & Endurance:

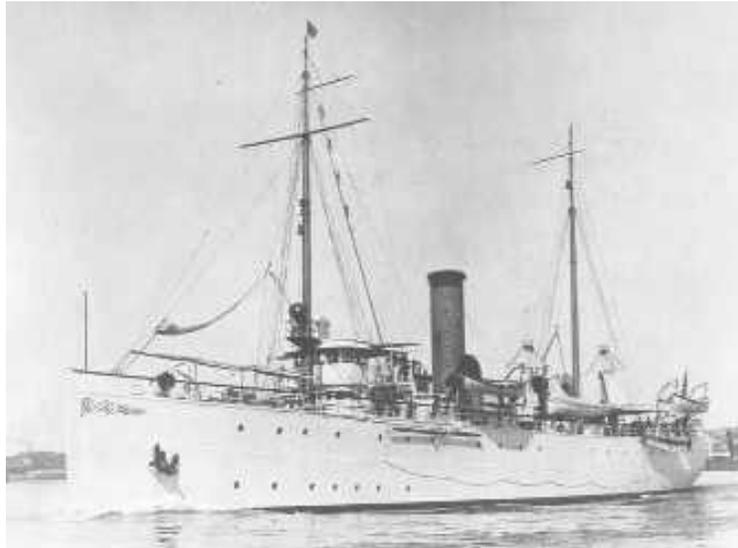
Max: 13.2 knots

Cruising:

Complement: 44

Armament: 4 x 6-pounders

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No caption/date/photo number; photographer unknown.

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### **History:**

The last wooden-hulled cutter to see service with the U. S. Revenue Cutter Service (USRCS) was the *Androscoggin*, a revenue cutter designed especially for icebreaking duties. She was built for the Revenue Cutter Service at Tompkins Cove, New York, by Rodermond Brothers. At that time naval engineers believed that a wooden hull, because of its inherent elasticity, worked best in ice. She was launched on 16 January 1907 and was sponsored by Miss Emma Frye White. She was commissioned on 8 July 1908. That summer, *Androscoggin* began operations out of Portland, Maine, her home port for the next seven years. She carried out the work of the USRCS, cruising waters off the northeastern seaboard from Eastport Maine, to Cape Ann, Mass. Each winter--by virtue of her special construction and her iron-strengthened bow--she would assist ships and craft when needed and destroy menaces to navigation in her assigned waters, besides performing icebreaking chores in the ports in her cruising area.

On 11 August 1909, *Androscoggin* received orders directing her to search for six men on a life raft, the survivors of the Navy tug *Nezinscot* which had capsized and sunk off Cape Ann on that morning while en route to Boston. Fortunately, all hands were picked up by another ship that first reached the scene of the disaster. Later that year, *Androscoggin* patrolled the international yacht races at

Marblehead, Massachusetts, and took part in the Hudson-Fulton celebrations at New York city that September.

On 11 January 1910, while at Portland, *Androscoggin* received a wireless message to search for the steam lighter *Columbia* which had departed New York on the day before Christmas of 1909, bound for Port-au-Prince, Haiti, with a crew of 11 men on board. The cutter got underway the following day and traveled 2,399 miles during a fruitless two-week search in which she found no trace of the missing lighter or its 11-man crew. *Androscoggin* then resumed her duties out of Portland that lasted into the summer, when she temporarily transferred to Washington, D.C. Returning north in November for repairs at the Boston Navy Yard, she remained there into January 1911 and then again took up operations out of Portland.

In the summer, she headed south for repairs at the depot, Arundel Cove, South Baltimore, Maryland, which lasted into November. Getting underway on the 12th of that month, she headed north for her cruising grounds, but put into the Boston Navy Yard briefly in early December for repairs to her bow sheathing which was damaged when an iron plate wrenched loose on the morning of 9 December. Resuming operations out of Portland soon thereafter, the ship engaged in her usual "winter cruising," which included icebreaking. While she was laboring through the heavy ice of Penobscot Bay early in February 1912, the action of the ice and the ship loosened the bow plates. She effected repairs and resumed her labors. Her captain later reported that temperatures under which she operated averaged 5 to 10 degrees below zero.

During the winter of 1912 and 1913, *Androscoggin* participated in searches for two schooners, *Future* and *Winslow* off the Virginia capes in January 1913. Records do not indicate the latter's fate, but the former had foundered on 3 January 1913 with the loss of three of the eight people on board.

On 10 April 1913, the USRCS restricted the operations of its ships since its funds for coal for the remainder of the fiscal year were so low that its ships could cruise "only at such times as may be absolutely necessary to assist vessels in distress." Captains were urged to exercise "the most rigid economy" but to keep "sufficient coal... on hand at all times to insure the prompt response of the vessel to any call for assistance during this period." Her complement reduced as well, *Androscoggin* remained inactive through the spring before the fiscal year ended on 30 June 1913 and new appropriations permitted her to resume a more active regimen.

Later that summer, *Androscoggin* entertained a number of important visitors, beginning with the Honorable William Gibbs McAdoo, the Secretary of the Treasury, who traveled in the ship from Rye, New York, to New York City between 15 and 21 August 1913. During that time, she also embarked Colonel Edward M. House, an influential advisor to President Woodrow Wilson, at Salem,

Massachusetts, on 17 August, during Secretary McAdoo's cruise. Later, on 1 September 1913, *Androscoggin* embarked Dr. Constantin Theodor Dumba, the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador to the United States, to witness the international Yacht Races held that year at Marblehead, Mass.

Subsequently ordered to the depot at Arundel Cove, for repairs, *Androscoggin* arrived there on 13 December 1913 and underwent repairs and alterations for the remainder of the month. Underway on New Years Day 1914, she ran aground at Cove Point, Maryland, three days later. Refloated and apparently little damaged, *Androscoggin* proceeded on to Boston.

On 28 January 1914, the Navy tug *Potomac* had departed Newport, Rhode Island, to rescue vessels ice-bound off the coast of Newfoundland, but suffered an icing-in herself. *Androscoggin* departed her station at Portland to report to either Halifax or Sydney, Nova Scotia, "as directed" and to participate in efforts to free the Navy tug. Ultimately, the attempt was given up on 14 February, *Potomac* abandoned to the ice for the winter but salvaged the following spring and returned to service after repairs. *Androscoggin* subsequently departed Halifax on 18 February.

The cutter spent a little more than the first half of the year 1914 in routine operations highlighted by a ceremonial visit to Gresham. *Androscoggin* visited Boston in mid-March to take part in the yearly Evacuation Day festivities and returned there later that spring to honor Spanish-American War veterans at Boston on 24 May. Memorial Day saw the ship at Rockland, Maine.

On 21 July, *Androscoggin* received orders to participate in ceremonies, to be held by the Maine Historical Society, at Monhegan Bay, Maine, on 5 August. However, before she could take part in that event, long-simmering tensions in the Balkans flared up and touched off the conflagration that escalated into World War I. Those faraway events affected *Androscoggin* immediate future.

The day before the scheduled festivities at Monhegan Island were to commence, the North German Lloyd Line steamship SS *Kronprinzessin Cecilie*--piloted into port by a banker-yachtsman whose father owned a summer home in the vicinity since none of the ships officers were familiar with the local waters--stood into the sleepy Maine seaport of Bar Harbor and caused quite a stir amongst the local populace. The reason for this unorthodox port call soon became apparent. The majestic ship, her master concerned over the possibility of being captured on the high seas by British or French cruisers, had been nearing Liverpool, England, when she received telegraphic orders to come about and return to the neutral United States, making for the nearest port, which, in view of the liners diminishing coal supply, looked like Bar Harbor. One reason for the captain's anxiety soon became apparent. In addition to her 1,216 passengers (some of whom were British Army reservists), the ship carried \$10,679,000 in gold and some \$3,000,000 in silver. This cargo prompted newsmen to dub her "The Treasure Ship."

In response to the request made by the New York office of the North German Lloyd Line, representatives of the State, Treasury, and Commerce Departments, and of the USRCS, met in Washington to discuss the situation. Secretary McAdoo, as a consequence, ordered *Androscoggin* to Bar Harbor on 5 August 1914, "to permit no foreign vessel to leave (the) vicinity without clearance." Similar orders went to USRC *Woodbury* (at Portland) and USRC *Gresham* (at Boston). The purpose of the *Androscoggin's* visit to Bar Harbor would be primarily to guard the transfer of the gold and silver from the liner to tenders in which they would be taken ashore, loaded on to a train, and returned to New York City.

Accordingly, *Androscoggin*, Capt. W. E. W. Hall, USRCS, in command, departed Portland on 5 August and reached her destination the next day, having been joined en route by *Warrington* (Destroyer No. 30), Lt. Comdr. Daniel Pratt Mannix commanding. The latter warship had been dispatched from Monhegan Island on such short notice that the 30 or so men ashore for liberty had been rounded up in a big hurry. The arrival of the destroyer and the cutter fueled wild speculation in the press. The *New York Times* reported on 7 August that they had come "to guard and possibly to take back to New York the . . . gold that the refugee liner carries. As to that," the member of the 4th Estate concluded, "the captains of both vessels were uncommunicative." The only thing that Capt. Hall and Lt. Comdr. Mannix would say was that they had been "given instructions to protect the neutrality of the United States and to see that all vessels leaving here have proper clearance papers."

Ultimately, with the situation at Bar Harbor resolved --gold, silver, passengers, and mail all transferred ashore and *Kronprinzessin Cecilie* interned-- *Androscoggin* weighed anchor and departed Bar Harbor on 16 August, relieved on station by USRC *Mohawk*. After touching briefly at Portland, *Androscoggin* got underway on the 18th, bound for the depot at South Baltimore. She reached Arundel Cove on the 22d and later shifted to Baltimore, where she was drydocked for hull repairs that lasted through the remainder of the summer. While at Baltimore, the cutter contributed a landing party to march in the Star-Spangled Banner celebrations in that city on 11 September. Returning to the depot on the 22d of that month, *Androscoggin* remained at Arundel Cove into the winter before getting underway for Boston three days before Christmas. She arrived there for duty with the Eastern Division on the last day of 1914. *Androscoggin's* operations that winter reflected the new emphasis in providing otherwise unobtainable medical services for the men of the American fishing fleets. An Act of 24 June 1914 had authorized the Commandant of the Revenue Cutter Service to "detail for duty on revenue cutters such surgeons and other persons of the Public Health Service as . . . necessary. As a result of this act, *Androscoggin* was fitted out as a hospital ship and "relieved from the regular duties as normally performed by cutters" to cruise the fishing banks off Nova Scotia and New England.

Shortly after *Androscoggin* departed Boston on 15 January 1915 for Gloucester, Massachusetts, to confer with representatives of the fishing industry, the Revenue Cutter Service and the Lifesaving Service were merged by the Act of 28 January 1915 establishing the United States Coast Guard. Based in Boston, the cutter touched at the ports of Halifax, Liverpool, and Shelburne, Nova Scotia, and frequented the Brown and Lahave Banks. The catches for the regular season had proved disappointingly small by the time the ships expected service with the fishing fleet was up, the fishermen remaining in the waters off Nova Scotia in the hope of reaping more bounty from the sea. This development moved Capt. Hall of *Androscoggin* to report the necessity for remaining "on station" into the early spring. This extension granted, *Androscoggin* operated off the Grand Banks, pausing briefly to take on coal and water at Halifax, into late May, 1915.

*Androscoggin's* doctor treated more than 100 medical cases during the first five months that the ship spent in two at-sea periods among the craft off the Banks. During that time, she did not neglect her other traditional functions--assisting three vessels in distress.

Following this arduous duty, *Androscoggin* sailed south for the Coast Guard Depot at South Baltimore, arriving on the morning of 7 June. She remained there until sailing for Boston that morning of 12 October. Resuming her operation with the fishing fleets that November, the ship again operated out of Halifax and Shelburne, into May 1916. The presence of a hospital ship in their vicinity over the next few months, was a source of great comfort and security to the fishermen, and her duty remained unchanged as the world situation worsened. Ultimately the conflict in Europe became "global" when the United States entered the war on 6 April 1917. The following day, *Androscoggin* received word to acknowledge "Plan One."

As the Coast Guard came under the control of the Navy for the duration of "The War to end all Wars," *Androscoggin* quickly prepared for wartime service. Within 10 days of Americas entering into hostilities, Commander, Squadron 1, Patrol Force, Atlantic Fleet--to which *Androscoggin* was initially assigned--recommended that she be rearmed with a battery of four 3-inch guns *vice* her 6-pounders. However, the shortage of such weapons made their assignment to *Androscoggin* by the summer impossible and instead her "worn" guns were replaced by similar caliber weapons taken off USCGC *Tampa* when the latter was rearmed for war service.

Based at Provincetown, Massachusetts, *Androscoggin* was "prepared at all times to get underway at two hours notice for patrol or other duties" of the Patrol Force, into the autumn of 1917. Outside of her new wartime patrol duties, *Androscoggin* continued to perform her usual peacetime task of going to the aid of distressed shipping. One instance of this occurred when, on 9 November 1917, she received a report that SS *Santa Rita* had broken down; *Androscoggin* departed Boston at 1030 that day and learned at 1135 on the 12th that *Santa Rita* no

longer needed assistance since another vessel had arrived and provided her with enough fuel to make port. *Androscoggin* returned to port on the morning of the 15th. A short time later, her rudder and steering gear were damaged in a gale and prevented her from assisting ships in trouble off New Brunswick and Prince Edward Islands early in December.

During the course of her subsequent repairs, it was necessary to put the cutter up on the marine railway at the Boston Navy Yard. Winter icing conditions, however, delayed the ships leaving the railway. *Androscoggin* was undocked on 15 February and resumed operations soon thereafter. In early March, the ship took the disabled merchantman, SS *Turret Crown*, in tow, taking her to Boston where a tug assumed the tow and took the ship in for repairs. In March, *Androscoggin* -- in company with USCGC *Tuscarora*-- escorted a formation of 110-foot subchasers to Bermuda. Following that tour of convoy duty, she towed barges from Guantanamo Bay to Hampton Roads in April.

Upon completion of repairs at Boston, *Androscoggin* cruised on Ice Patrol, reporting ice conditions off St. Johns, Newfoundland, in mid-May. During the course of her first patrol in those waters, she sighted five large icebergs, two small, and seven "growlers" on 29 May and one small berg on 1 June. Her final report recapitulated what she had seen--no icebergs off the Grand Banks but some to the southward and eastward, concluding that vessels in that area should proceed cautiously in "thick weather."

After stopping briefly at Boston for maintenance, *Androscoggin* returned to northern waters a second time in June, for the Ice Patrol duty before resuming her activities looking in on the fishing fleet off Georges and Grand Banks area that August. During the subsequent repairs at Boston, the efforts to have *Androscoggin's* armament upgraded finally bore fruit, when the ship received 3-inch guns that had initially been earmarked for new construction minesweepers. *Androscoggin* operated briefly in the waters off Nova Scotia in early October 1918 and touched at Quebec toward the end of the month. On 11 November, the armistice was signed ending hostilities. Between 5 and 9 December 1918, the cutter convoyed a flotilla of nine trawlers from Halifax to Boston.

Detached from the 1st Naval District for temporary duty under the orders of the "Commodore Commandant of the Coast Guard" on 7 March 1919, *Androscoggin*--her battery removed prior to departure--resumed Ice Patrol duties soon thereafter. This ship and the cutter *Tallapoosa* received orders to patrol the steamship lanes to determine the limits of ice areas and to broadcast the information to ships in their vicinity. Relieving *Tallapoosa* on station on 1 May and in turn relieved on the 16th, *Androscoggin* conducted one more patrol before returning to Boston in June.

Relieved of duty with the Ice Patrol on 5 July, *Androscoggin* resumed her operations attached to the 1st Naval District. On 20 July 1919, the ship departed

Boston and proceeded to Halifax, convoying four Canadian trawlers and two Canadian drifters to be returned to that government after their brief service with the Navy. Shortly after midnight, one of the trawlers (*No. 55*) disappeared into the murk.

While the convoy stopped, *Androscoggin* commenced blowing her whistle at intervals, and heard a three-blast answer which she assumed came from the missing *No. 55*. *Androscoggin* then lay to for almost an hour, waiting for the trawler to return to the convoy and plainly heard a whistle in the foggy darkness. Steering toward the sound but seeing no lights accompanying it, the cutter proceeded on the same course for five miles but neither sighted nor heard anything more. She then again lay to but--as day broke upon the calm, hazy sea--there was no sign of the lost trawler. At 0600, on the 21st, *Androscoggin* continued on her voyage, convoying the three remaining trawlers and the two drifters, reaching Halifax on the 23d. Happily, the missing trawler turned up safe and sound, reporting her position as anchored off the fogbound entrance to Dover, Nova Scotia, on the morning of 23 July and indicating her intentions to proceed when the fog cleared.

After returning to Boston, *Androscoggin* escorted a second convoy of Canadian drifters to Halifax (30 August to 2 September) before arriving at Boston on the 5th. Although the Coast Guard was transferred back to the jurisdiction of the Treasury Department on 28 August 1919, *Androscoggin*, along with the cutters *Ossipee*, *Acushnet*, *Mackinac*, and *Winnisimmet*, was not returned to the Treasury Department until 22 September 1919.

*Androscoggin* resumed regular cruising duty the following spring, based at Boston and was assigned to the Eastern Division, held in readiness to answer calls to assist vessels in distress "and perform all the other duties of a regular cruising cutter." Her cruising grounds were to encompass the waters from Eastport, Maine, to Nantucket Shoals. Highlights of her operations over the next few months were two instances in which she responded to calls for assistance from vessels and temporary duty on the New York station with the International Yacht Races.

That fall, the cutter cruised to Gloucester, Mass., a visit occasioned by a complaint, lodged by fishermen with the local congressman, that a number of Gloucester fishermen's nets had been tampered with by persons unknown. They asked the government to protect their nets "against marauders" who were daily destroying them some three to four miles off Cape Ann. *Androscoggin* accordingly sailed for Gloucester on the morning of 22 October 1920 and investigated the matter, spreading the news that the Coast Guard was "on the lookout for the persons guilty of cutting the fishnets or any other interference with the fishermen in their regular pursuit of trade."

Following that mission, *Androscoggin* resumed operations out of Boston, spending the latter part of the year under repairs at the Boston Navy Yard before resuming duty status on 1 January 1921. Once in January and again in February, *Androscoggin* searched unsuccessfully for wreckage reported by passing steamers, looking for possible menaces to navigation that needed to be destroyed. That spring, in the absence of *Acushnet* from her regular station at Woods Hole, Massachusetts, *Androscoggin* was based temporarily there, taking over *Acushnet's* cruising area out of that port. She continued standing-in for other ships when she operated out of New London in the absence of USCGC *Ossipee* in early June. During the course of those operations, *Androscoggin* visited Gloucester, Portland, Rockland, Cutler, Eastport, Lubec, Pleasant Bay, Castine, Belfast, Boothbsy, Kittery Point, and aid return calls on Rockport and Gloucester between 6 and 15 June 1921. Her orders directed her to board vessels, enforce the customs, navigation, and boat laws ascertaining "whether there are known violations of laws coming under the cognizance of the Coast Guard and take action accordingly.

Subsequently sailing south to Norfolk, *Androscoggin* relieved USCGC *Manning* on 1 July, freeing that cutter to undergo an overhaul. During the course of that brief stint of replacement duty, *Androscoggin* visited Chincoteague Island, searching for the schooners *Bertha* and *Pocomo*, whose owners had allegedly been using them for smuggling whiskey in violation of Prohibition Laws. When her search proved unsuccessful, the ship returned to Norfolk on 12 July.

When *Manning* returned to her regular station, *Androscoggin* received her final cruising orders: to proceed to the Coast Guard Depot at South Baltimore for decommissioning. Departing Norfolk on the morning of 3 August, *Androscoggin* reached the Washington Navy Yard the following afternoon. Prior to arriving at the Coast Guard depot on 16 August, the ship conducted a brief cruise down the Potomac with a congressional delegation, members of the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce-- including its chairman, the Honorable Samuel E. Winslow of Massachusetts--embarked. "The run was delightful and the experience instructive," Winslow later wrote in appreciation to Commodore William E. Reynolds, the Commandant of the Coast Guard, "Everything about the boat [sic] in respect of its cleanliness, order, and good conduct of the crew indicated a careful observance of duty on the part of everybody.

After the removal of stores and equipment to be properly stored at the depot, *Androscoggin* was placed out of commission at the Coast Guard Depot, South Baltimore, on 26 August 1921, and her crew was assigned to the newly built USCGC *Tampa*. On 10 May 1922, *Androscoggin* was sold, along with the former cutter *Itasca* (*ex-Bancroft*) to Mr. Charles A. Jording of Baltimore.

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