

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: ROBERT GOODVOICE 5  
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: BOX 385  
PRINCE ALBERT, SASK.  
INTERVIEW LOCATION: WAHPETON RESERVE  
SASKATCHEWAN  
TRIBE/NATION: DAKOTA (SIOUX)  
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH  
DATE OF INTERVIEW: OCTOBER 13, 1977  
INTERVIEWER: ROBERT GOODVOICE  
INTERPRETER:  
TRANSCRIBER: J. GREENWOOD  
SOURCE: SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES BOARD  
TAPE NUMBER: IH-107  
DISK: TRANSCRIPT DISC 10  
PAGES: 14  
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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Robert Goodvoice, born 1901  
- stories of treachery by Americans against the Sioux who had  
fled to Prince Albert, Sask. after the 1862 Minnesota Massacre,  
including distribution of disease-infested clothing and food.  
NOTE: Attempt to verify with R.C.M.P. records

- sings and explains a very old Dakota song sung by children  
when rabbit-hunting.

This is October 13, Thursday, 1977. I am Robert  
Goodvoice. My age is 76. I live on the Round Plain Reserve  
and I belong to the Wahpeton band, Wahpeton tribe. And the  
Round Plain Reserve is situated eight miles northwest from  
Prince Albert.

Now, after the outbreak, the Sioux uprising of 1862, these  
happenings that my grandfather had remembered and told of it  
many times. As long as they were in the United States, within  
the boundaries of the United States, the United States  
government didn't bother them. They would bother them only by  
word. Telling them to move, move into, further into the United  
States, further south. There is a place there for them. They  
built houses and that is where they wanted all the Dakotas to  
gather. There was a church there and school there and some  
recreation building, a dance hall. That is all they needed

them days. And a doctor would be there and a nurse. They would be well looked after. They will get - every week they will get rations. They will give them food so that they can just stay there and eat and sleep and live. But they didn't move there. They said they would but they never did. They just lived close to the border, only on the south side of it.

But after they moved into Canada, then they started bothering them. They made offerings to them to go back. First thing happened was there was two chiefs, two Indians, two Dakotas were kidnapped as I have mentioned the names in other tapes. That is Eeotokta and Tatayjusnomonee. Eeotok was a - he was not a chief. Neither was Tatyjusnomonee. But they were kidnapped anyway. And they took them to New York. And say one was Little Crow, (?), and the other was Red Top, Eekbadoota. That was wrong. That is the first.

And then an offer was made to the Dakotas that were in Canada to go back to the United States. It was open for them for ten years. Whosoever that go back to the United States would get, the adults would get a quarter section and the babies and the children would get eighty acres. And this remained open for ten years. They were told that they had ten years to go back into the United States. They are speakers, Dakota speakers from the United States, come into Canada and speak to the Dakotas that are in Canada. My grandfather remembered this very well. And the Dakota speakers, they are very good speakers. Their talk was very good. Everything was offered to them, land, living, clothing, homes were offered to them. But nobody went back. As far as my grandfather said, as far as he knew, there was no man that went back. Only one man that went back. His name is Wasoosomacano. Wasoosomacano went back because he broke the ruling of the camp.

The camp was short of food and the buffalo was getting scarce. So they sent out some boys, men, to see if they could spot some buffalo, a herd or some buffalo someplace. This is around Moose Jaw, up in there. And they did spot a herd so they come back and they brought the message to the teo tipi. That is where the decision-making lodge was, right in the center of the camp. And they called this the teo tipi. And then tomorrow morning, early, they choose all the good riders and they got all the good horses that are good runners and could catch up to the buffalo and they told them where the buffalo were and which way they should run and they generally run them between two hills. If there is two hills, they generally run them between. Because when they go in between the two hills, some buffalo run on the side hills and most of them would like to run right on the flat so they crowd each other there and they slow down very, very much. And in the meantime the hunters catch up to them and, that is where they do most of the killing when these buffalo are running between two hills. They crowd each other. Sometimes one would trip and then they would trample him to death. Calves and buffalo, anything that tripped, the other buffalo would trample him to death. And if they don't, they will rip the leg or break the ribs or

something and he will be alive and the hunters will go there and shoot him and they have their - and that is how they get their meat.

Now they had all that figured out at the teo tipi. My grandfather, he was there but he don't ride and he don't care too much about buffalo meat because he is from the east and there is no buffalo over there but there is elk, moose, and jumpers and deer. Further west, that is where the buffalo were.

So this Wasoosomacano, he was listening, he was there. And he knew the plans. They have got to run them northwestward to these two hills there, come close together so they are going to run them in between them two hills. So, on the other side, there is some rocks there. They said there is rocks there. They said they will slow down considerably. So Wasoosomacano heard all this. So early in the morning, he was on foot, he didn't have no horse to ride. He was on foot and he had a gun. So early in the morning, before the horsemen took their horses to the herd, he went around and then he looked for the buffalo, the herd. And when he saw them, the buffalo saw him too so they all - they were laying down, so they got up and they started off, they ran away. So, Wasoosomacano, he got them

started, they were on the go. So Wasoosomacano, he stood on a hill watching them. Just then the riders appeared and they took after them but they had too far of a start, they couldn't catch them. So, the leaders of this hunt, this buffalo hunt that particular day, they went up to that man standing on the hill and that was Wasoosomacano. They punished him. They horsewhipped him for scaring up the herd. He did that and the whole tribe was still hungry. So they horsewhipped him and they knocked him down. He laid there and they left him there. Finally he got up and he went home. And he laid in there until his wounds were better. They were not better but they were just dry scabs where the whip had cut him. By that time, somehow, they got some food for his wife. His wife bundled up a bunch of food for him and give it to him and he went back into the United States. These people in Canada, his own people, his own Dakota's punished him and they horsewhipped him. He didn't like that so he didn't want to be with them any longer so he went back to the United States.

After he got over there, he got a quarter section. And around 1913 or 1914, Wasoosomacano died. He left his estate to his son, James Black, who died in Moosewood Reserve south of Saskatoon not too long ago. When he sold that quarter section of Wasoosomacano's who was James Black's (166) - (166) is his Indian name, and his English name was James Black - when they sold that estate, he got the money in Canada and he enjoyed. So that is the only man that my grandfather knew that went back to the United States and got a piece of land. There was women that went back, not on their free will but their men come from the United States and made love with them and then they, these men, they kidnapped these ladies, maybe with a baby or maybe with two children, but anyway they took them back to

the United States. There is three that I know of that were receiving money and that is how they got a quarter section and eighty acres for the babies that they took with them back within that ten-year period.

And then after that is over, most of the people were around Prince Albert. And the people in the United States and the people in the southern part of Canada, they say the people that were cruel and were criminals were all living around Prince Albert, which is not right. But Prince Albert - the Dakotas that lived around Prince Albert got the blame for what cruelties that were committed in 1862, for that Minnesota Massacre. So the United States offered so much for Chief Little Crow, Eekbadoota, Wakaeaska, White Tent, who else now...Chadasoppa, Black Hawk, (201), that means - now let's see, Many Hail Stones. That was his name. And (208), he was

here too but he moved back to Manitoba. And what else now did he say? There was another person...oh yes, Packoqwa, that is the name. I can't translate that. Now these people, they were - they took part in that Minnesota Massacre. So did some people in Fort Qu'Appelle, they took part too and they are there. And Griswold, Manitoba, which is now called the Sioux Valley, and Pipestone and Portage. And there is people in the United States, they remain over there and they class themselves as innocent people. But they are just as much guilty as the ones that are in Canada.

Therefore, the United States government sent people out to Prince Albert and tried to get rid of as many Dakotas that are living around Prince Albert. First of all, shortly before the 1885 Northwest Rebellion broke out, there was a man built a house. He built a house out of logs. And he made a good job and it is a long house, this is. It is about 20 yards long and about 10 or 12 yards wide. They don't go by feet but by yards. Twenty yards, that would be about sixty feet long and about twelve, that would be about thirty-six feet wide. And there is two tables in this big building. And he got it partitioned off and that is where this man lived. And he got a warehouse and there was meat and lots of food in there. When that building was done, just about the end of October and the cold weather set in. And this building was between, on the main road from the Dakota camp to Prince Albert. So any type of man, a woman or a man and his wife, as they passed there, he would call them in. He would call them in and give them a feed, he will feed them. They say he is a good cook. Meat and everything, homemade bread, and he will feed them and charge them nothing. Every day, he used to feed them.

Now, my grandfather, his cousins and his close relatives, they were always having suspicious ideas when things like that happened. When the white man give the Dakotas anything, they don't accept it. They always figured they were Americans that come to Prince Albert to kill them off someday. Now this man here fed them all winter. Never collected a cent for it and finally some of the Indians, what's left of them, went back to Saskatoon and - what they call that reserve now - White Cap

Reserve, those people, they are the ones that camped close to it. And they make a habit of it. They get up and got there and have breakfast. Midday, they go there and have their dinner. Supper, they go there and then they will take a little pail. On their way out, this man would give them some stew or roast or some, fill their little pail with some food

and give them piece of bread and some tea and tell them to have that before they go to bed. So they lived there. They didn't do any work, no trapping, no hunting, but they go there to this boarding house I would say, and they would take everybody, their families, the little kids. They say the man is a very, very kind person, very good nature. He is happy to see them and he feeds them and tells them to eat and gives them some more. He did that all winter until spring, when hot weather commenced to set in.

Then some would go and they had supper there and then in the morning, they went there to have breakfast. The cook was gone. The dishes and everything was in there and the warehouse was full of food, meat, all cut up. He got his meat from the butcher shops in Prince Albert. Everything was there. But the man was gone, the cook was gone. This man was alone. He didn't have nobody to help him. When he was building the house, then he had men working and built that house and they finished it and they say it was nice and warm in there and the tables were nice and lots of food, lots to eat. So the Dakotas, almost half of them, lived there, close there and they were living off this here Wasitiu, the white man's cooking, and he fed them for nothing. They lived there all winter until in the springtime when the hot weather set in.

When the hot weather set in, they took sick. They have hemorrhage and they break out in sores around the throat, around the glands and under the arms and wherever there is a gland, they break out in sores and they have hemorrhage. Cough up blood and then in no time the whole family died and they lived in tents and they can't bear to fasten them so wherever their fireplace was the only place where the ground was soft so they would make a big hole there and then they would bury the whole family in there. The man was gone. They don't know his name, they don't know where he came from and they don't know where he went to. And then a man went and told the people in Prince Albert, the McKays, they can talk the Dakota language. And these McKays and the Dakotas, they knew each other before they come to Prince Albert. So anything happened like that where they needed interpreter, they generally go to the McKay people. They speak for them and they interpret for them and they get them through to what they want and help them to get what they want. So that is that.

My grandfather, he said he passed there many, many times every day or every other day and he was called in there many times. Every time he goes by, this man would open the door and step out and call him and tell him to eat and go. "Come on, come on, eat!" No, they don't do it. There was lots of them.

And the man that went west with his wife and his sister, Tachamishota, he used to go by with his wife. They used to work in town. The lady used to scrub and clean house and wash for the white ladies in town and Tachamishota used to split wood and carry wood and do a lot of things for the people in town. They used to pass there pretty near every day, all winter and they were called to come in and have something to eat but they never answered, they never answered the invitation. They would keep going. And they warned other people, "A white man would never feed Indians like this for nothing. There is something bad with this. This must be an American. This must be a Big Knife." Esontonka, that is how they called the Americans - The Big Knife. "He must be a Big Knife and he must be sent here by the chief of the Big Knife country." That means it was the government of the United States, the president. So they had that idea so that is why they don't go there to eat. And they tell each other to keep away and keep away from the people that go there to eat. Sure enough, in the springtime, they just went down, they just died like flies. And then they went and reported it to the Mounties in Prince Albert. But who is it? What is his name? Where did he come from? Where did he go? How did he go away? All these questions were asked but they couldn't answer it. Nobody knew where he went. That is one time.

And then again, I think it was shortly after that, about four years after. I mentioned this man's name today. He had an extra power and he looked for Epunna when he got lost. He is the one that kind of head him off from going north and to drive him southward, Opaytawaseechu. He worked in town and on his way back, there is a man waving him to his home. So he went to his home, to the Wasituu's home, he was a bachelor living all alone. He give him something to eat and then he give him a sack, a sack full of underwear. There was about fifteen or twenty suits of underwear in this sack. And he told him, "You take this home. You take this home and give it to this and give it to that, give it away. Tomorrow you come back for some more. Look." He had about ten sacks full of this underwear. So Opaytawaseechu took the underwear home but he didn't give it out that evening. The next day he came back, took another sackfull home. That afternoon, he made two trips that day. There is three sacks that he had and that is quite a few suits of underwear then. So he called this man and that man and he called all of the people that he know, his best friends, he give them each a suit of underwear. They were brand new, brand new underwear. Never was worn, never was

washed, they were brand new. So there was about sixty of them, sixty men of all sizes. They got these suits and they put it on and these men were cutting cordwood for the Hudson's Bay Company then. So they put their new suit of underwear on and they got an extra one when the other one was dirty and one is getting washed, they put on another one, a clean one. This was their idea and most of them got two suits. They went to work cutting cord wood and they sweat. When they sweat, the underwear seemed to give them itch. Give them an itch. So

they scratch and scratch and scratch...

(End of Side A, Tape IH-107)

(Side B)

Most of them died and they named that year, that winter, where Opaytawaseechu, he was the first one to lay down with it, with the disease but it didn't kill him. I don't know why it didn't kill him because there was lots of them that laid down with it and never got up, it killed them. But Opaytawaseechu did lay down with it but he got better, he cured himself some way. Of course he is, as I have said today in the other records, in other tapes, that he had extra power. And that day when he first fell, he told, he sent the word out to the others not to wear the underwear, to burn them. They did but then it was too late.

That is another time where lots of them were killed and they reported this to the McKays and the McKays, I think it was Willie George McKay got ahold of a Mounted Police and went to this house where this Opaytawaseechu got this underwear. And there is still some in there but the man was gone. There is nobody in the house. He rented the house for a short while and then they went to the proprietor to find out who rented that house. He gave his name and address and all that but that wasn't his name and where he came from. The address that he gave wasn't his address so he was gone anyways. That is twice with the food and underwear.

And then there was a woman. A woman was working in town for one of the women of Prince Albert and on her way out towards her home, a lady came out of a door, that part of a house and called her. So she went there and she gave her a big bag of buns. Those buns were not big so there was quite a few in that bag. There was over 150 of these buns in that bag that this lady give to a lady called Opeta. That is only part of

her name. I just don't remember her full name but that is part of her name. To make her name short they called her Opeta. She had two sons and two daughters. Her husband died a few years ago. So she took these buns home and this white woman, this Wasitiu lady told her to take it home and give it to everybody - everybody, the boys, everybody, give them one, maybe two, give it to them. She made her understand that she is supposed to give that to other people.

At that time the Dakotas lived about two miles from Prince Albert, north of Prince Albert. Just about two miles, yeah. So she went home and she had this bag of buns. When she got home, her two daughters and her youngest son were away playing someplace. But her oldest boy - I don't know his English name, I don't think he has an English name because nobody went to school at that time - but anyway his Indian name was Wamoneeomonee. Wamoneeomonee was his name. That means a whirlwind. Whirlwind, a strong wind, a rough wind, something

like that. That is what it means, whirlwind. So when his mother got home, he was away and he just got back so there was no wood. So his mother was outside at the wood-pile, cutting some wood to make a fire. And in the meantime, he saw these buns in the bag so he took one and he ate one. And his mother told him to wait, that she would make some tea. By that time his brother and his sisters would be home and they all can have a piece of these buns. So he had one and then he quit.

And he sat on the chair and all at once he fell to the floor. His mother grabbed him and asked him, "What's the matter?" but he couldn't talk. And foam was coming out of his mouth and he was shaking. So she left him and she went to her brother, to a man by the name of Willie Gun. She told him that there is something wrong with her son and she asked her brother to come and see. So he went there, and by that time this boy moved to the furthest corner and laid in that corner there. When he heard the noise, he commenced to shake and the foam was coming out of his mouth and when they grabbed him, he would shake all the harder. When they talked to him, instead of answer, he would just shake and more foam would come through his mouth. And they know he was poisoned. Shortly he died and that is - what they call that? It is a poison that they used to give to poison coyotes. It is a wolf poison is the name for it. That is not the proper name for it but that is what it is and that is the way the coyotes act when they eat that. They lay there and as long as they are quiet and no noise there, they just lay there. But any noise or they are touched and they just shake and foam commenced to come out of their mouth. So, the rest of the buns, Willie Gun took it and he made a fire

outside and poured all that buns in there and burned it up. Nobody got any of the buns and that is the one that this boy ate and it killed him. So he saved about five or six.

Again, they took those buns and went to W.C. McKay, Willie Charles McKay. He can talk the Dakota language. He used to interpret for the Dakotas so they took them there and he explained to him what happened and he said, Willie Charles McKay happened to know Wamoneemonee. They said, "Wamoneemonee, he eat these buns and died." So they took it to the police and they fed one of these buns to a dog. And sure enough he, that dog acted as if he eat some wolf poison. Well, that is what he ate anyway. So that dog died.

So they come back and they got Opetta, the lady that brought these buns, they took her to town and they asked her to show the police where she got these buns. So she took them there, everything was there, dishes and coats and blankets and bed and everything was there but the lady was gone. And they too went to the proprietor and asked her, "Who is that lady?" She give her name and she give her address, someplace in the east. But that is the wrong address so she got away. After she did that, she just about wipe off. If Wamoneemonee didn't eat that, she would have given a few to every place where there was children. She would have made a real killing. This was

one boy ate one and died, and he saved the rest. That is the third time.

And then, the fourth time there was man who lived by this road leading to Prince Albert. And the Indians used that road a lot. So he put up a little house there with a team of horses. He lived there a few days and then when the Indians go by, he would call them, give them a slice bread, give them a sandwich and a cup of tea. And they would take that and away they would go. And he did that for about ten days and then he disappeared. By that time, the people that had drank the tea and eat the sandwich, they all had the same pains in the same place in the stomach. And their bowels started moving and they had no control of them and in two or three days they are gone, they are dead.

That is four times that people came to these Dakotas, we were the ones, it is our relations that got killed by these people from the United States. That is where they come from. And when Masawakeean, the preacher, the Dakota preacher came from the United States, they heard that the United States government has paid people to come to Prince Albert and kill them off, kill off all the Dakotas around Prince Albert. They would get so many thousands of dollars for doing that. That is why these people came over here and poisoned them; and give them clothing that there was something in it, some kind of

acid I believe, and when they sweat it came into contact with the body and then it started eating right through the skin and right through the flesh and never stop eating until it was right into, right through them. That is four times, but each time, my grandfather and his partners or his relatives - there is about thirty-five or forty of my grandfather's relations, cousins and uncles and granddaughters and grandchildren - and they never go to these places. Not even once. So they pulled through, they didn't die. None of them. They didn't lose a person there. But all those that go there and eat everyday, two or three times a day, they are the ones that passed away.

There was one fellow that lived. He was just a little boy. I think they say he was about four or five years old. His father and mother and brother and sisters are all dead but that little boy, a good little boy. I think now, let's see now, my auntie was six years of age at that time and this here man, this little boy was a year younger than my aunt, so he must have been five. But he had a touch of this, what this man was feeding them. He broke out in sores around the glands and throat and under the arms but that little fellow, he was tough, he lived through it. And he become a man and he went back to the United States and lived in Montana for many years. Then he come back to Canada and got himself a wife and he had a few children but they all died and there is only two boys living. And he is dead and his wife. His name was James White Cap. He has got two sons living in Moosewood Reserve. That fellow went through, he lived through what the white man did to the Dakotas around Prince Albert.

So the Dakotas around Prince Albert, they had some pretty tough knocks from the United States government. The Dakotas in the United States, they blamed everything on the people that lived in the Prince Albert district. But they were just as guilty. Everybody was guilty. Anybody that is a Dakota, they are guilty of what happened and what crime was committed in that 1862 Sioux Uprising. They were all guilty, all the Dakotas were guilty. All the Dakotas took part in that battle against the Americans. But to save their - to keep their head and body together, they blamed it on the Dakotas that were around Prince Albert. And these things - my grandfather saw this and he lived through it but he didn't go to these things. He got a suit of underwear from Opaytawaseechu but he never wore it. But when he heard that the people that wore them and sweat in them, they started to itch and then something there just eat right through the skin and right through the bone. So when he heard that, he took his underwear, new underwear and made a fire and burned it.

And there is another man. A man came with four horses, nice horses and nice carriage that could hold about, at least about twenty-five, thirty people. They had blankets up on the roof and under and wherever they can, whatever they can carry, there is room. He had four horses and he told them that he wants the people from Prince Albert to go with him to the United States and he is going to join some kind of a circus, some kind of a show, that they would go to all the big cities and make money. But none of them go and they heard after that that rig that he brought with the four horses, that rig was air tight. And this Masawakeean said, this minister, Reverend Masawakeean said, "It is a good thing you people didn't get in that place. He would put you in there and he will start going. And while you are in there, the air in there is poisoned and you will fall asleep and you will never wake up. It is a good thing you people didn't ride with that man to go to the - to take part in that circus." Now this was Reverend Masawakeean that told the Dakotas that were living around the Prince Albert district. And he told them that the American government is really after you people especially this one and that one and that one and that one. He named them all and that is the ones he need. He wants them to be prosecuted. Take them, take them to the United States and be hanged over there. This is what he told the Dakotas around here.

Now there is one thing...no, I better go back to my grandfather's childhood days, and my grandmother too. They generally camp in a circle. One or two boys will get out in the middle of the camp and they will sing a song. I have heard him sing it many times and I know it and I am going to sing it. This is the way it goes.

(Sings song)

That is the way it goes. That means, "Hey, hey, the rabbits are running. Call them, call them. Hey, hey, the rabbits are

running. Call them, call them." Then all the kids would join. They will all join and they will sing that once in a while. And when there is fifty or sixty boys and girls get together then they will go to a bush and they will surround that bush and they will close in on and then they will drive the rabbits

to one place, one side and the boys would stand there with clubs and slings and arrows, whatever they can kill the rabbits with. And they say the rabbits are black over there. They say they used to kill, oh, whatever rabbit there is in that bush, they used to kill them. And each one, they kill enough that each one would take home two or three so there must have been lots. And it is a pretty fair-sized bush. Each one would get something. And on the way back, on their way back, they will stop and they will sing this song and they will dance there, a Round Dance, and then they will go. And before they enter the circle, the camp, the last place they stand there and they sing this and they'll dance and then they break up. That is the way they hunt rabbits. And the Crees, the Crees do the same thing. But they don't sing. And this song that I just sang is an old one. You take my grandfather, he died when he was 95. He must be at least nine or ten when he used to join these rabbit hunts and that's when they used to sing that. And they used to sing, that is the way they gathered people to go rabbit hunting. Not only that time but before then. That song must have been two, three hundred years old.

I told this to, what do you call them...Elias...I forgot his last name but he is around here. He is around here. I told him that and he said, "Bob, don't forget it. Put that in the tape," he said. "Sing that song if you know it." So it just come to my mind now and I, that is why I sang it. That is the wording of it. "Hey, hey," (goes into Dakota). That means call them. "Hey, hey, the rabbits are running. Call them, call them." When the rabbits are running, they make some kind of a noise and the rabbit would stop and listen and that is when the boys with the arrows and the sling or the spear or whatever they have in their hand to kill, they kill them when they stop. They make some kind of a noise. That is the noise that the rabbits make. And when they make that noise, the rabbits, they all stop and listen. And that is when they, the boys would do the killing.

And when the wild ducks lay their eggs around the sloughs, among the bulrushes, they go out gathering wild duck eggs. And they sing a song but I just forgot it. The wording was something..."Little duck, I am coming to get you. Little duck, you are in your home but I am not, I don't want your home but I want you." They stand at the shore and sing that. And then when they finished, well they all get into the slough and then they search for these...and there is nests in the sloughs, eggs

of all kinds. They have pails made out of birch bark and they fill that. And then they will divide the eggs between the whole group that were out there gathering wild duck eggs. These are, my grandfather, he said he was a little boy when he used to join them. And he was telling this, he was around 90

years old. It wasn't too long after, he passed away. I got his picture. I was lucky to get his picture and I was glad that I found it. And the little boys and little girls, they used to form a group where they, some evenings, not every night but some evenings, there would be about twenty or twenty-five, they make kind of a group. They will get a drum, the little boys and girls, they sing and they dance. They move in front of the chief's house and they will sing and they will dance in front of the chief's house...tent. And when they finish, before they moved on, the chief would give them something, he would give them a tanned...

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