

CANAWLERS AT REST

JACOB HERMAN HAGER

b. August 21, 1815
d. May 15, 1876

By Robert F. & Carolyn I. Schmidt

On July 31, 1847, the Wabash & Erie Canal was officially transferred from the state of Indiana to the Trustees of the Wabash & Erie Canal. An office was established at Terre Haute, which was centrally located in the area of future canal construction. In charge of the accounting and secretarial affairs at this office was Jacob Herman Hager, whose position was entitled Clerk. In today's world that title would more likely be Financial Manager. The history of Jacob's family is very interesting and relates to how he eventually came to be in charge of the canal office.

Hagerstown, Maryland was founded by a Jonathan Hauger (Hager), an immigrant from Germany. He arrived there around 1736. In December, 1739 he purchased land in Maryland and established a village. He called it Elizabethtown after his wife, Elizabeth Kershner. He worked to establish Washington County and to make this town the county seat. By 1772 the village was popularly called Hager's town. The state officially changed the name to Hagerstown in January 1814.

It appears that our Jacob Hager was related to Hagerstown's founder, Jonathan, but not in the direct line. Jacob's grandfather was Jonathan "Tavernkeeper" Hager, who was born in 1752 in New Jersey. He married Maria Rohrer of Hagerstown in 1778 and lived there until about 1781 when they moved to nearby Franklin County, Pennsylvania. They had a total of eight children. Their sixth child, George Hager, born on July 1787 in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, was our subject's father.

The family returned to Hagerstown in about 1790. Jonathan "Tavernkeeper" Hager kept the Foun-

tain Inn on the public square across from the courthouse in Hagerstown. Although we know he was an inn keeper, we do not know if he was a brewer as well. Being German it appears that the family had knowledge of the brewing business.

George Hager at age 27, married a (West) Virginia girl, Eleanor Waugh on May 22, 1814. She was 19 years old. Their first son, Jacob Herman Hager, was born in Hagerstown, August 21, 1815, at the conclusion of the War of 1812-1815. All of his six brothers and sisters were also born there from 1816-1822.

Jonathan "Tavernkeeper" Hager died in February 1823 and his wife, Maria, died a year later in August 1824. Both are buried in Hagerstown.

Sometime between 1828-32, young Jacob Herman Hager was sent to attend Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, a small village northeast of Columbus. There he did very well in his studies. Two of his classmates were Edwin Stanton, from Ohio and later-to-be U.S. Secretary of War, and David Davis, from Maryland and future U.S. Supreme Court Judge. Stanton attended Kenyon from 1830-32 and Davis attended from 1828-1832. Jacob Hager graduated with high honors. Perhaps it was he that suggested to his father that the family move to Terre Haute for better opportunities in the west. Classmate David Davis later moved to Illinois. Stanton remained in Ohio.

Perhaps the tavern business fell on hard times after the death of George's parents. The National Road was begun in 1803 but by the mid 1830's the construction was expanding into Indiana. In 1835 George, Eleanor and the entire Hager family headed west and settled in Terre Haute, Indiana where plans were underway for a canal system to intersect the National Road in that town. George established a brewery located at Water & Sheets Streets, which operated from 1835-36 before being destroyed by fire. It was the first brewery in Terre Haute. George also operated a dry goods store just north of the courthouse.

Jacob was 20 when the family moved to Terre Haute. He helped in his father's dry goods store from 1835-1837 and then later when he was not involved with governmental endeavors. In 1838, Jacob was selected by the Indiana House of Representatives to be the Assistant Enrolling Clerk. In 1839 and 1840 he was elected as the Enrolling Clerk, with secretarial responsibilities for the business of the House.

The question arises, "What were the circumstances that led to Jacob Hager's selection as clerk for the Wabash and Erie Canal by its three trustee's Charles Butler and Thomas Blake, who represented the bond-

JACOB HERMAN HAGER'S FAMILY

Born Jan 1752 Morris, NJ 1756 Washington Co, MD	Died 16 Feb 1823 Hagerstown, MD 6 Aug 1824 Hagerstown, MD Children Johannes Jacob Maria Katherine Samuel George Johnathan David	Johnathan Tavernkeeper Hager Maria Anastasia Rohrer 1779 1823 1780 1800 Born in Hagerstown 1782 1800 Born in Chambersburg, PA 1783 1804 " 1785 1855 " 1787 1870 " 1792 1864 " 1794 1800 Born in Hagerstown, MD	Married 1778 < Fontain Inn tavern " " " " " " "
24 Jul 1787 Chambersburg, PA 15 Oct 1794 Falling Waters WV	31 Mar 1870 Terre Haute, IN 21 Feb 1868 Terre Haute, IN Children Jacob Herman Luther George Ellen Jane Martha Mary S Ann Elizabeth Johnathan Benjamin	George Hager Eleanor Evelyn Waugh 1815 May 1876 Born in Hagerstown 1816 Apr 1885 " 1818 Oct 1892 " 1819 " 1820 " 1820 1862 " 1822 Aug 1885 "	Married < -- 1st Terre Haute 22 May 1814 " " " " " " "
21 Aug 1815 Hagerstown, MD 21 Dec 1834 Vincennes, IN	15 May 1876 Terre Haute, IN 10 Oct 1863 Terre Haute, IN Children Emeline Wright John Ross George Herman	Jacob Herman Hager Caroline Ross *(Below) 1857 ? infant dth Born in Terre Haute Jun 1858 Jun 1932 " 1861 "	Married < -- Clerk of W&E Ca 27 Dec 1855 Born in Terre Haute Died in Seattle, WA "

John Ross - Cartoonist Seattle Daily Times - Dok's Dippy Duck

- Married Ann Louise Hyde 27 Jun 1882

Son was Luther George Hager, born in 1885, died in 1945

* 1st - married 23 Dec 1852 John K. Lagow (b 1831), who died 23 Jun 1
Father was banker John H. Ross 1799-1873 & mother Clara F. (?)
Grandparents - Ephriam Ross & Anna Wells - lived in Terre Haute

holders, and Nathan Palmer, who represented the state of Indiana?"

While working in the Indiana Legislature Jacob had become well acquainted with Thomas H. Blake. Perhaps it was this relationship that influenced his selection as Clerk. Blake was a Terre Haute attorney and later the presiding judge of the Circuit Court in Vincennes. Blake, who had been in Washington City (D.C.) since 1842 serving as the Commissioner of the U.S. Land Office, resigned and returned to Indiana in 1845 to help with Indiana's financial crisis. At that time Charles Butler had been sent to Indiana to resolve the debt crisis and became acquainted with Blake. Blake may have told him about Jacob. Or perhaps Nathan Palmer may have been acquainted with Hager's capabilities, because Palmer earlier had been the state treasurer and had had some dealings in 1841 with the Terre Haute Branch of the Indiana State Bank. Of course, Jacob Hager would naturally have been a prime candidate for the position since he lived in Terre Haute.

Regardless of the reason, in 1847 Jacob Hager, age 32, was selected to be the clerk at the Wabash and Erie Canal office in Terre Haute. Thomas Blake was the person who had advocated making the canal headquarters in that town. Jacob served in this position until 1876 when he and Thomas Dowling sold the canal at auction on the courthouse steps. Dowling, originally a Terre Haute newspaper publisher, had replaced Thomas Blake after Blake's death in Cincinnati on November 28, 1849. In December 1853 the canal headquarters were located at 629 Ohio Street.

As mentioned before, Jacob arrived in Terre Haute in 1835. This was the same year that both William C. and David Linton died. William worked tirelessly as a fund commissioner for the Wabash & Erie Canal and died in January at Philadelphia while on official canal business. David Linton was a business partner of William C. in a dry goods firm in Terre Haute. David died in August around the time of the birth of his daughter Margaret. David had married Mary Patterson from Rockville, Parke County, Indiana on July 3, 1832.

Apparently, young Jacob Hager, age 20, soon took a liking to widow Mary Linton, age 20. However, he was unsuccessful in his pursuit. Jacob later wrote a poem that has survived describing his endless love for Mary. His poem ended up in many newspapers and was even printed in the *Louisville Journal*. Jacob is described as studious, with rare literary taste, an elegant writer and poet, familiar with several languages, and one of the most cultivated among a number of intelligent contemporaries.

Mary Patterson Linton came from a fine family.

TO MARY

"Nessum maggiore dolore
Ce ricordars! Del tempo felice
Nella miseria."

Mary, my days of hope and joy are ended;
Gone are the happy hours of life's sweet June,
And the bright dreams that with my being blended
Their glowing tints, have vanished all too soon.
But I may love thee still, though love be folly,
Though crushed and withered every hope may be;
Dearer to me this passion, pure and holy,
Than a successful love apart from thee.

Thou may'st forget the truth that once we plighted,
The blissful visions of those happy hours,
When heart with heart, and soul with soul united,
Life's journey seemed but one bright path of flowers.
Forget all this — drink deep of Lethe's waters —
Forget at night the promises of noon,
Be most capricious of Eve's daughters,
And change thy loves with every changing moon.

But ask not me, beloved, to forget thee.
Oblivion's blessings would be sought in vain,
For I must ever love thee and regret thee,
Though every memory be fraught with pain.
Thou art the one deep thought of my existence,
The sad remembrance which will not depart,
The worshipped idol, whom no time nor distance,
Nor hopelessness may banish from my heart.

One of her sisters, Sarah, married (1840) Demas Deming, a bank president. Another sister married (1844) John Palmer Usher, who later became Secretary of the Interior under the Lincoln & Johnson administration. Her brother, Chambers Y Patterson, was a judge in the local Circuit Court and operated Patterson's Mill in Armiesburg, Indiana. (See *The Hoosier Packet*, "Chambers Y. Patterson," by Charles Davis, April 2011)

David Linton, Mary's deceased husband, was also the brother of Sarah Linton, who had married Thomas H. Blake in 1830. Jacob may have been acquainted with Mary (Patterson) Linton through Blake. Sarah (Linton) Blake died in 1831 after giving birth to a daughter, Glorvina. Tragedy seemed to follow the Lintons.

Having been rejected by Mary (Patterson) Linton, who remained unmarried, Jacob poured himself into his work at the canal office for some years. By the 1850's, he was approaching 40 years of age and was still single and looked for a suitable mate. Mary Linton had been the same age as he, but now he went for a younger woman. She was a widow, the daughter of his business acquaintance, John Ross of Vincennes. Her background is as follows:

In 1812 Ephriam Ross had taken a contract to build a brick schoolhouse in Onondaga County, New

York, a few miles south of Syracuse. Due to the inflation that occurred during the war, he saw that he would be unable to fulfill his contract without a substantial personal loss. Since his entire family was involved in brick-laying and carpentry work, fulfilling the contract at such a cost would impact all of them. He asked the county to be released from the contract. The county refused and he went substantially in the hole.

Around 1815 Ephriam's son, John, age 16, traveled west to the Indiana territorial capital at Vincennes. In the fall of 1818 Ephriam and the rest of the family came west down the Ohio River by flatboat and settled in Crawford County, Illinois across the river from Vincennes. However, they soon found the soil too marshy. They heard that Terre Haute, which had been founded up the Wabash River in 1816, had much better ground.

In 1824 Ephriam's family, with the exception of John who remained in Vincennes, moved to Terre Haute. They became the first brick makers in town. They also had both a dry goods store on the west side of the courthouse square and a farm. Through their business transactions they were well acquainted with the Hager's of Terre Haute.

In Vincennes John Ross learned the banking trade. When the State Bank of Indiana was reorganized in 1834, a branch was established in Vincennes with John Ross as president. He remained in that office until its charter expired in December 1856. When the new State Bank of Indiana was created on January 1, 1857, John Ross became its president. When the Vincennes National Bank replaced the state bank in 1863 John again became its president and served in that capacity until his death at age 73 in 1873.

On January 13, 1846, Indiana and Illinois chartered The Wabash Navigation Company to build a lock 50 feet wide and 230 feet long alongside a 13 foot high dam on the Wabash River to increase steamboat traffic on the river. Most of the company's stock was purchased by residents of Vincennes. John Ross became the Secretary of the company. The work was completed by 1849 and enhanced navigation.

Jacob Hager, our subject, was well acquainted with the Ross brothers. Harry Ross was a director of the State Bank branch in Terre Haute. In 1857 both Jacob Hager and John Ross owned bank stock in the Vincennes branch of the State Bank.

On December 23, 1852, 18 year old Caroline Ross, John's daughter, married John K Lagow (21) of Palestine, IL. Lagow, whose deceased father had been a prominent local lawyer, had served in the US Navy during the Mexican War and just gotten out of the ser-

vice. He was described as a "fine catch for any woman." Unfortunately, he contracted consumption (TB) during his navy service and died six months later on June 23, 1853, leaving Caroline, a widow.

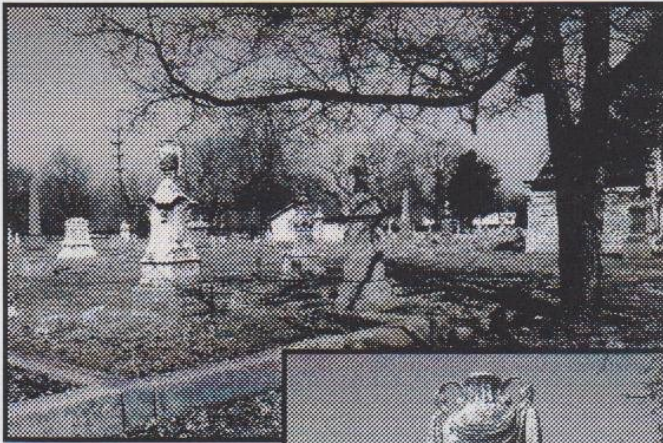
Jacob Hager and Caroline (Ross) LaGow were married on December 27, 1855 in Vincennes. He was 40 years old and Caroline was 21. He and Caroline soon began their family. Emeline Wright Hager, named for her aunt, was born and died shortly thereafter. John Ross Hager was born June 29, 1858 and George Herman Hager was born in 1861.

Caroline's sister Sarah (Sada) married Charles McCulloch of Fort Wayne. Charles was the son of Hugh McCulloch, who was then Secretary of the Treasury in Washington. Charles was 25 and Sarah was 23 when they married on June 20, 1865. Again we see a marriage brought about through banking connections.

In the mid-1850s the Wabash & Erie Canal was in its heyday after having been completed to Evansville in 1853. Sometime during the Civil War Jacob went to Washington, D.C. At Washington Jacob met with his old friend Edwin Stanton, who introduced him to President Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln made a joke about Jacob's small stature compared to the tall and robust Edwin Stanton and David Davis saying, "These gentlemen must have horned you away from the trough when you were at Kenyon."

Just when Jacob's canal work and family life seemed to be stable, tragedy struck. On October 10, 1863 his wife Caroline suddenly died at age 28 leaving him with two small children. Fortunately he had domestic servants to help with their care, but this was the beginning of a general decline in his life. Canal revenue began falling drastically due to competition with the railroads. His mother, Eleanor Hager, died in February 1868 and his father, George Hager, passed on two years later in March 1870. Both of them were buried in Woodlawn Cemetery at Terre Haute.

At age 55 Jacob was forced to seek additional employment since portions of the canal south of Newberry had been closed in 1861, the Cross Cut had been leased to Chauncy Rose, and sections to the northeast had been leased to the Wabash Canal Company. Around 1870 he became a paymaster for the St Louis, Vandalia & Terre Haute railroad. By 1874 the Wabash & Erie Canal was coming to an end. The Wabash Canal Company surrendered its lease. On November 19, 1874 Jonathan K. Gapen brought suit that the canal be sold for the benefit of the bondholders. On February 24, 1876 the canal was auctioned off in Terre Haute. Just a few months later on May 15, 1876, while Jacob Hager was having a conversation with his son, he collapsed at his



JACOB H. HAGER

**BORN AT
HAGERSTOWN, MD
AUG. 21, 1815**

**DIED
MAY 15, 1876**

son's feet and died.
He was 61 years old.

Jacob Hager had dedicated his working life to the Wabash & Erie Canal. Both he and his wife, Caroline, are buried in Division 48 Block 5 Lot 22 of Terre Haute's Woodlawn Cemetery next to his father and mother, George & Eleanor Hager. This is in the southwest part of the cemetery.

A pamphlet about Woodlawn Cemetery says "it is the final resting place for people who were involved in our community in a whole variety of capacities." Under "our Wabash & Erie Canal" it lists the following men:

William J. Ball - a chief engineer of the Canal and later of the Evansville & Crawfordsville railroad.

Colonel Thomas Holdsworth Blake - a trustee of the Canal and U. S. General Land Office Commissioner. Also fought in the War of 1812, became a U. S. Congressman, and was the first judge of Vigo County.

Thomas Dowling - a trustee of the Canal who also founded the Wabash Center in 1832. He was an Indiana State House Representative.

Jacob Hager - head clerk of the Canal for 25 years and the treasurer for the Vandalia rail-

road.

William Crawford Linton - the first Fund Commissioner of the Canal. A member of the Indiana State Senate 1828-1831. Brother-in-law of Thomas Holdsworth Blake.

The respect others held for Jacob can be seen in comments made by an old friend. In June of 1895 Col. William E. McClean visited Charles Butler at his home in Fox Meadow, NY. There they talked about the time Mr. Butler had spent in Indiana and of old friends who had by then passed on. Mr. Butler specifically mentioned Thomas Blake, Thomas Dowling, Jesse Williams, William J. Ball, Harry Ross and Jacob Hager. Later McClean commented on Butler's memory saying, "... surprising me by the accuracy of his memory and the interest he still takes in his old acquaintances of the Wabash." He also stated that "Although never a citizen of Indiana, no man played a more important part in its early financial history than did Mr. Charles Butler." Charles Butler died on December 13, 1897 and was buried in Woodlawn Cemetery in New York city.

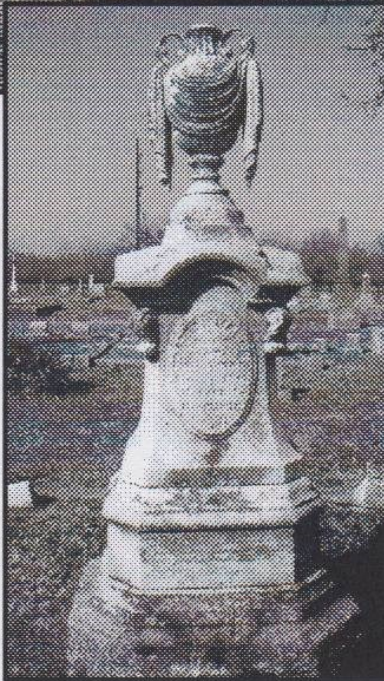
Jacob's Children and Grandchild

Jacob's sons, John Ross Hager and George Herman Hager were 17 and 15 years of age at the time of his death. They went to live with their uncle Luther George Hager and his wife, Miranda. Luther was an artist and illustrator. In 1848 he drew the oldest sketch known of Fort Harrison north of Terre Haute from the memory of James A. Modesitt. Luther probably influenced the artistic ability of his young nephew, John Ross Hager.

The 1880 U.S. Federal Census showed John as a bank clerk and George as a clerk in a store living in Luther's household. While living there John studied to become a dentist and then married. Upon the death of Luther in April 1885, we assume George moved elsewhere. We do not have any further information him.

John Ross Hager married Anna Hyde in June, 1882. He worked as a dental surgeon in Terre Haute where their children were born. In 1899 they decided to move to Seattle, Washington. In the 1900 Census, John is still listed as a dentist. About 1906 he decided to become a cartoonist. Initially "Dok" Hager's cartoon was "The Umbrella Man." His cartoon for the *Seattle Daily Times* in 1917 was "Dok's Dippy Duck." This was a precursor to Disney's "Donald Duck." When John became blind in 1925 he had to retire. He died in 1932.

John Ross' son and Jacob's grandson, Luther George Hager, also became famous as a cartoonist. His work appeared in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* and later in *The Christian Science Monitor* where his strip "The



Jacob's Brothers and Sisters

Through the years all of Jacob Hager's siblings, who had moved to Terre Haute from Maryland with their parents, had prospered and married. Some remained in Terre Haute and some moved elsewhere. They were:

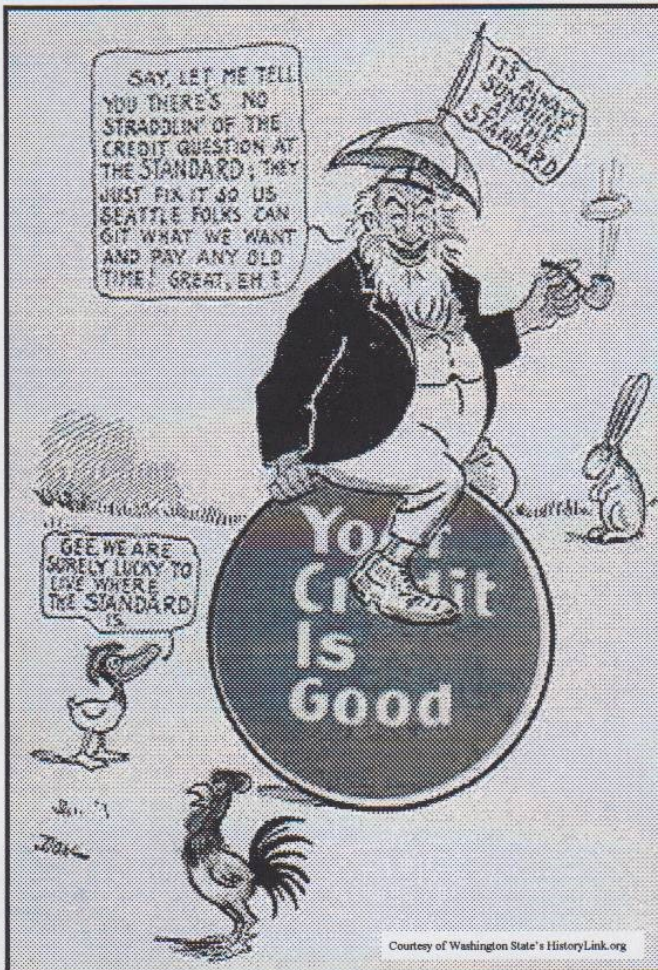
Luther George	(1816-1885)
Ellen Jane	(1818-1892) Gratiot
Martha	(1819-?) Williams
Mary S.	(1820-?) Towsey
Ann Elizabeth	(1820-1862) Floyd
Jonathon Benjamin	(1822-1885)

Jonathan B. Hager, the youngest, went to West Point from 1840-42 and then returned to Terre Haute where he engaged in various business pursuits. He also got into the life insurance business, before the Civil War. He turned this insurance business over to his older brother, Luther, when the war broke out. At the time of Jacob's death there was a \$3,000 life insurance policy underwritten by Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company of Newark, New Jersey - established in 1845.

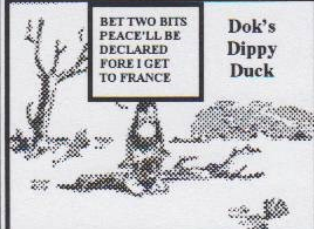
At age 39 Jonathan became a captain in the 14th Regular Infantry based in New Haven, Connecticut. He was part of the bodyguard that guarded the body of Lincoln when it was in the Indiana State Capital building. He also organized the Oliver P. Morton GAR Post #1 in Terre Haute and was the first post commander. In 1879 Jonathan was president of the Terre Haute Car and Manufacturing Company, with his brother Luther as secretary. Jonathan died near New Haven, Connecticut August 28, 1885. His body was taken to Terre Haute to be buried in Woodlawn Cemetery.

Sources:

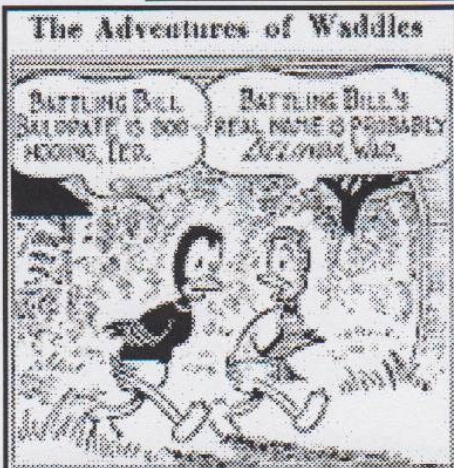
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This advertising card for The Standard shows the Umbrella Man with the duck that came before "Dok's Dippy Duck" cartoon strip, a frame of which is shown on the right. Jacob's grandson wrote the comic strip "The Adventures of Waddles."



"Adventures of Waddles" was published in the 1920s through the 1940s. He took over his father's interest in ducks. He lived until 1945. Creative talent seems to have run in the Hager family.



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