

THE ROTCH-JONES-DUFF HOUSE & GARDEN MUSEUM

FINDING GUIDE: Rotch and Arnold Family Papers

Accession no. 2017.5

Introduction

The Rotch and Arnold Family Papers is a collection of business and personal documents relating to three generations of the Rotch family: William Rotch Jr. (who built the Rotch-Jones-Duff House); his sons Joseph and William and his daughter Sarah; and his grandson William J. Rotch. Also included are business and personal papers of James Arnold, Sarah Rotch's husband, and their daughter Elizabeth. William J. Rotch was an executor of James Arnold's will, and the collection covers the administration of that will in some detail, including charitable donations.

The Rotch-Jones-Duff House and Garden Museum purchased the collection in 2017 from a private owner in New Bedford whose relationship to the family is unknown.

The earliest document is dated 1818 and the latest 1882, but the coverage is episodic. Most of the papers relate to business dealings: receipts from New Bedford merchants; correspondence and accountings of investments in real estate, railroads, and mills; and related legal matters. One large section includes receipts for the expenses of maintaining the New Bedford–Fairhaven Bridge. Joseph Rotch's papers relate mostly to domestic expenditures on food, clothing, furniture, and household fixtures.

The Rotch family, along with the Rodmans and Morgans, with whom they were extensively intermarried, dominated the New Bedford economy during the whaling era and later. They owned ships, wharves, warehouses, ships' suppliers, and candle works; they bought and sold whale oil; and they invested their profits in textile mills, midwestern land, railroads, and real estate. They were Quakers until the early 1820s, when a schism among the Friends led most of

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them to the Unitarian Church. They lived in lavish homes along County Street, most of which still stand.

William Rotch Jr. (1759–1850) had been engaged in whaling on Nantucket before he moved to New Bedford after the Revolutionary War. His son Joseph (1790–1839) owned a silk mill, and William R. (1788–1860) continued in the family businesses. William J. Rotch (1819–1893) maintained his interest in the family concerns and invested in cordage and textiles. He served as New Bedford's second mayor.

James Arnold (1781–1868) was a descendant of two distinguished Rhode Island families: the Arnolds and the Browns. When he married Sarah Rotch, he joined the Rotch-Rodman family business but invested widely outside the city. He and Sarah (1786–1860) were known for their charitable endeavors and involvement in abolition. Their charitable activities are documented to some extent in the collection. The collection also includes a few documents relating to their daughter, Elizabeth (1809–1860).

To learn more about the Rotch and Arnold families, one can visit two houses: the Rotch-Jones-Duff House (the residence of William Jr. late in his life), and the Arnold Mansion, built by James and Sarah and inherited by William J. Rotch, who altered it extensively. Additional documents relating to the families can be found at the Massachusetts Historical Society; New Bedford Whaling Museum; the Lemelson Center of the Smithsonian Institution; and Swarthmore College. Two family histories have been published: Joseph L. McDevitt, *The House of Rotch: Massachusetts Whaling Merchants, 1734–1828*; and John Morgan Bullard, *The Rotches*.

Box list

I. Joseph R. Rotch (1790–1839)

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Box 1

A. Accounts with family members

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2. Francis Rotch, 1821–25, **OS**

3. Receipt from William R. Rotch, 1833

B. Household expenses, receipts

4. Allen & Little, 1829; Allen & Pease, 1830, 1832; Allen, Gideon, 1826; Allen, James, 1829; Allen, R. 1826; Allen, Thomas, 1835–36; Allen, William, 1827–28; Anthony, Capt., 1836; **OS**

5. Bailey, John, 1826, 1827; Bain, William, 1833, 1836, 1837; Baker, Job, 1829; Baker, Goddard, 1830; Barker, A. & Co., 1829, 1832, 1836; Barney, A. C., 1833, 1836; Barney, Peter, 1829; Bartlett, J. H., 1829, 1830, 1831, 1832, 1836; Booth, Albert, 1827, 1828, 1829; Booth, Thomas, 1828, 1829, 1831–33, 1836; **OS**

6. Bosworth, J., 1819; Britt & Co., 1836; Brown, Godfrey, 1830; Brownell, Elnathan, 1831; Brownell, Joseph, 1826–33; Bunting, S., 1831; Burbank, S. M. & Co., 1829–36; **OS**

7. Card, Charles, 1826, 182 (?); Card, Jonathan, 1827; Carter & Stoll, 1829; Chase, Davis, 1833; Chase, Isaac, 1825; Clapp, Ichabod, 1829, 1830, 1833, 1836; Coggeshall, Richmond, 1830, 1833; Cole, Thomas, 1834; Coolidge, E. T., 1831, 1832; Crocker, Oliver, 1829; **OS**

8. Davenport, D., 1826–36; Delano, Ezra, 1836; Delano, H., 1831; Delano, T., 1821–28; Delano & Attwell, 1824; Dickinson, Charlie, 1832–34; Dillingham, Edward, 1826–29; Durfee, James Jr., 1825–33; Durfee, William, 1836; **OS**

9. Earl, Clark, 1831; Edes & Stetson, 1827; Everett & Tomlinson, 1828; Folwell, Thomas, 1831; Foster & Nelson, 1830

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10. Gibbs, H., 1826–29; Gibbs, Robert, 1832; Gifford, Lewis, 1830; Green, A. A., 1837; Grinnell, C. H., 1829; Groves, Philip, 1833; **OS**

11. Hallet & Taylor, 1833; Hastings, Joseph, 1833; Hastings & Hummell, 1836; Hicks, ?, 1829; Hill, Thomas, 1829; Howe, William, 1828, 1829, 1830, 1832, 1834, 1836; Howland, G., 1824; Howland & Britt, 1832; Jenney, J., 1827; Johnson, Nathan, 1836; Kelly, Ezra, 1826; Kempton, M., 1822–28; Knight, Joseph & Isa, 1834; Knight, William, 1825, 1827; **OS**

12. Macomber, L., 1826–36; Mails & Co., 1829–30; Maxfield, Warren, 1827; Monroe, 1836; Nelson, George S., 1837; Nichols, Howard, 1828–36; **OS**

13. Sanford, B. H. J., 1829–36; Shearman, A., 1826–30; Smith, P. C., 1832; Snow, Samuel, 1827; Spicer, Samuel, 1825; Spooner, Paul, 1822, 1828; Stoddard, John L., 1827; Swain, Oliver, 1826–29; Sylvester, David, 1830; **OS**

14. Taber, Francis, 1827, 1832; Taber, William C., 1832; Tappan, George, 1836; Thompson, Asa, 1836; Thornton, Elisha & Sons, 1829–36; Tobey & Ricketson, 1832, 1836; Tripp, James, 1828; Tucker, A. & H., 1824–29; Tucker, Chas. R., 1836; Valentine, H. C., 1829

15. Wady, James, 1830–36; Ward, A., 1832; Webster, John, 1830–32; Webster & Bourne, 1833; West, John P., 1825; West, W. R., 1825–30; Whitridge, William, 1833–37; Wilcox, B. & Co., 1826–32; Williams, Thomas A., 1829; Winslow, Thomas, 1828–29; Wood, Abraham, 1827–29; Wood, Samuel, 1828; Wood, Stephen, 1829–31; no name, billiard table, 1835; **OS**

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16. Grinnell & Minturn; Fish, Grinnell, & Co.; Gardner, George; Pratt, John, & Son; Smith, Stephen; Winslow, J.; 1826–34; **OS**

II. William Rotch Jr. (1759–1850)

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Box 2

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3. Leases, 1841, 1848
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9. Items removed from account book, 1832–36

10. Bank book, 1828–30

11. Bank book, 1831–37; Merchants Bank

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12. Receipts: Alden, Nathan, 1831; Allen, Alden, 1831; Allen, Ansel, 1819–23, 1828; Allen, Frederick, 1828; Allen, R., 1820; Allen, Robert, 1830; Allen, Rufus, 1831; Barker, Josiah, 1830; Barnett, Robert, 1820, 1830; Barney, Peter, 1827, 1830; Bates, Joseph, 1825, 1841–42; Beetle, William, 1830; Bennett, Robert, 1820, 1830; Besser, Nathan, 1828; Bisbee, J. B., 1829, 1830; Bonney, Samuel, 1826, 1829; Borden, Samuel, 1829, 1830, 1831; Bradford & Fuller, 1830; Briggs, Hallett, 1830; Burden, Samuel, 1826; Burgess, Obadiah, 1830; Butte, William, 1830

13. Receipts: Card, Charles, 1829; Caswell, 1820; Chace, P. & J., 1830; Churchill, Isaac C., 1819; Coggeshall, Charles, 1831; Cobill & Hill, 1840–41; Crowell, David, 1827, 1830; Chandler, Corbit, 1828; Clark, Thomas, 1829; Cromwell & Howland, 1829; Damon, Joseph, 1824; Davenport, Dudley, 1826, 1827, 1828, 1829, 1831; Delano, Jethro, 1821, 1831; Dexter, R. W., 1842; Duglas, George, 1826; Dunbar, Elijah, 1826, 1830

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14. Receipts: Fish & Robinson, 1830, 1832; Gardner, Edmund, 1830; Gerish, A., 1828, 1832; Gifford, A., 1820; Gifford, Hallett, 1820, 1825, 1829; Glass, ?, n.d.; Green, Savill, 1827; Grinnell, A., 1848; Grinnell, C., 1827–31, 1843; Grinnell, M. R., n.d.; Hammond, James, 1829; Hammond, William, 1821-22; Harrison, John, 1820, 1821; Hathaway, Ezra, 1826-27, 1830; Hathaway & Field, 1830, 1841; Henry, Gilman, 1842; Howland, Frederick, 1821, 1831; Howland, Davis & Co., 1820; Howland, John & James, 1819-20, 1822, 1826; Hussey & Allen, 1821; Huttleston, Mayhew A., 1827, 1830; Ingram & Russell, 1828-30

15. Receipts: Jenney, S., 1829-30; Jenne[y], William, 1823; Kempton, M., 1825, 1827-31, 1841; Learned, Almavin, 1828-29; Leonard, Bradford, 1828, 1831; Leonard, Samuel, 1841; Lindsey, Benjamin, 1822-23, 1827-30; Liscomb, A., 1830; Macomber, Isaac, 1830; Marvel, James, 1823; Maxfield, Ephram, 1827; Mosher, John, 1828–29; Nye, Clement D., 1823, 1825–27, n.d.; Nye, William C., 1826

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17. Receipts: Sawyer, West, & Co., 1841; Shearman, Davis, 1824, 1829; Shearman, Jabez, 1823, 1828, 1831–32; Shearman, James, 1825–26; Shearman, Jesse, 1827; Shockley, Joseph, 1826; Silvester, David, 1829; Slocum, 1825; Smith, 1828; Sowle, Henry, 1822–1823; Spooner, William, 1824–30; Stetson, 1824; Stevens, 1832; Stott, Levin, 1824, 1826, 1829; Sullings, H., 1822, 1830

18. Receipts: Taber, Asa, 1824-26, 1830; Taber, John, 1824–27; Taber, Joseph, 1826–27; Taber, Nathan, 1821–22, 1824, 1826–28, 1830–31; Terry, J. F., 1827–28; Tripp, Francis, 1821; Tripp,

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19. Receipts: Uran, Paul, 1827, 1830

20. Receipts: Wadsworth, Daniel, 1830; Washburn, Jonathan, 1830; West, William, 1827; White, William, 1826, 1830; Wilcox, Phillip, 1827; Wilcox & Richmond, 1830; Willcox, B., 1827; Willcox, Bennett, 1828, 1831; Wilson, Luther, 1830; Winslow, John, 1829, 1831

21. Fragments: accounts, n.d.

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3. William R. Rotch, household accounts, 1846, 1847, **OS**
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6. From George A. Wood, 1847, 1848
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11. Bailey, John, 1846; Bartlett, A. & H. (Clark & Bartlett), 1845–46, 1858; Beetle, William, 1847; Blake, James E., 1858; Bliss, Henry, 1858; Bliss, M. H., 1858; Brownell, Joseph, 1846; Brownell, Perry L., 1857; Brownell & Wheaton, 1858
12. Candell, James, 1858; Canwell, William, 1846; Chandler, Charles, 1846; Chase, Isaiah, 1846, 1858; Collins, J. H., 1846, 1858; Congdon, Sarah, 1846; Cornish, Aaron, 1858; Crane, Levi, 1846, 1858; Cummings, Benjamin, 1846, **OS**
13. Davenport, Dudley, 1847; Davenport, Munro & Co., 1858; Durfee, I. & T. & Co., 1858; Dunbar, C. S. & D. A., 1846; Dyer, James, 1846
14. Eddy, J. M., 1846
15. Ferguson, J. L., 1847; Fitzpatrick, Edmund, 1858
16. Gibbs, William H. 1846–47, 1858; Green, Horatio N., 1858; Greene & Woods, 1858
17. Hale, George, 1847; Hall, J. D. & Co., 1858; Hamlin & Gibbs, 1846; Hathaway, Lewis, 1858; Howard, William M., 1858
18. Jackson, William, 1858; Johnson, N., 1846; Jones, Edward C., 1858; Johnson, Nathan, 1846
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22. New Bedford Cordage Co., 1856; Nichols, Howard, 1846; Nye, L. G., 1838, 1858
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25. Samson, Elias, 1846; Sawyer, West & Co., 1846; Sisson, Job, 1846; Smith, J. W., 1858; Swain, Oliver, 1845
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30. Lists of accounts, 1818, 1819, 1837, 1840, n.d.
31. Chase & Tompkins, 1831, 1832; estate of R. C. Plummer
32. Receipt, City of New Bedford taxes, 1858
33. Receipt, City of New Bedford, taxes on William R. Rotch's estate, 1861, 1867
34. Proprietors of patent rights for Brewster's self-adjusting domestic spinners, 1824

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35. Correspondence from Capt. Eben Smith, re. new bark, 1848
36. Correspondence from Capt. Richard Smith, 1849

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37. Correspondence from John Chase and William Ashley re John Coggeshall and Cato Taylor, brig *Orion*, 1818

38. Schooner *Sarah*, 1847; ship *Courier*, 1830; schooner *Cornelia*, 1847

IV. William J. Rotch (1819–1893)

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4. Correspondence, Caroline L. Hare, n.d.

4a. Executor, with John Thornton, of estate of William R. Rotch, (1788-1860),1863

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6. Investments, Mexican Central Railway Co., Ltd., 1884

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9. Order to transfer stock to James Arnold, 1862?

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11. Correspondence from Mary Ann Curwin, 1869, 1871

12. Receipts for Wamsutta Mills dividends, 1882

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13. Correspondence from Hart & Goldsbury Land Office, Davenport, Iowa, 1867–71
14. Correspondence with Barling & Davis, N.Y., 1869
15. Memorandum of bonds, 1866, fragment
16. Executor, estate of Charles H. Carter, 1868, 1874
17. C. Plummer estate, 1832
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9. Correspondence re Iowa property, with Kent & Goldsbury, 1869–72
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12. F. E. Parker, correspondence, 1868–69
13. F. E. Parker, correspondence, April–June 1869
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23. Receipts for bequests, 1871–76
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V. James Arnold (1781–1868)

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25. Railroads: Boston & Lowell, 1849, 1860; Boston & Maine, 1852; Boston & Providence, 1847, 1861

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32. Burlington Gas Light Co., 1857

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36. Real estate, New Bedford, Mass., 1829–62, n.d.
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38. Real estate, Taunton, Mass., 1845, 1859; see also Taxes
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40. Investments, New York, 1857–67
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V. James Arnold (1781-1868)

A. Personal papers

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THE ROTCH-JONES-DUFF HOUSE & GARDEN MUSEUM

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11. Unitarian Chapel Fund, 1867
12. New Bedford Horticultural Society, 1847
13. City of New Bedford, tax bill, 1867
14. Correspondence, L. S. Powell, 1868, education for slaves, Back-to-Africa movement
15. Arnold Charity Fund receipts, 1870–79
16. Arnold Charity Fund receipts, 1880–83
17. Arnold Charity Fund receipts, n.d.
18. Arnold Charity Fund, Tucker & Cummings, Hart & Allen, J. H. Perry, 1870
19. Miscellaneous documents possibly related to Arnold

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A. Financial Papers

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24. Charities and bequests, 1858, 1860, n.d.
25. James Arnold, letter regarding Sarah's will, 1865
26. Estate, division of bequests and opinion of Judge Curtis, 1866, 1869, **OS**
27. Estate, receipts for taxes collected, 1861, 1864–67; U.S. tax return, 1868
28. Estate, receipts for bequests, 1860–61
29. Estate, receipts for expenses, correspondence, and fragments, 1869, n.d.

VII. Elizabeth Arnold Tuttle (1809–1860)

A. Estate

Folder

30. Estate, correspondence regarding Charles M. Tuttle agreement, 1860
31. Note regarding sovereigns of England, n.d.

VIII. Unrelated or Unidentified Documents

Box 8

Folder

1. To Theodore F. Talbot, Rochester, N.Y., 1829 re. litigation
2. Ruth Clark to C. H. Warren, 1833, re Robert B. Clark, Circuit Court of U.S., Boston
3. James Butterworth, account book, 1864

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4. Jesse Rhineland to “My dear brother,” June 4, n.d., re David B. Ogden, oil, and family matters
5. Found object, booklet, “Memorandums, Tables and Schedules Comprising the Outfit of a Whaling Voyage,” n.d.
6. Miscellaneous unrelated items, no specific identification
7. Unrelated certificate of insurance, 1971, torn in half
8. Miscellaneous unrelated items

Oversize Box

Oversize Folder 1, Joseph Rotch

- Box 1, folder 1, account with Francis Rotch, 1821–1825
- Box 1, folder 2, accounts with family member, 1825–1827
- Box 1, folder 4, account with Allen & Pease vs. Joseph Rotch, 1832
- Box 1, folder 4, account with Gideon Allen, 1825–1826
- Box 1, folder 5, Joseph Rotch to William Bain, 1835
- Box 1, folder 5, account with A. Barney, 1832, 1833, 1836
- Box 1, folder 6, account with Britt & Co., 1836
- Box 1, folder 7, account with E. N. Chaddock, 1830
- Box 1, folder 7, account with J. Clapp, 1836
- Box 1, folder 7, account with Coggeshall, Richmond & Vose, 1832
- Box 1, folder 7, account with Coggeshall, Richmond & Vose, 1833
- Box 1, folder 8, account with T. Delano, 1821
- Box 1, folder 10, account with Britt & Co. or William Greene, 1836

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Box 1, folder 11, account with William Howe, 1829–1833

Box 1, folder 11, account with M. Kempton, 1828

Box 1, folder 11, account with W. M. Knight, 1826–1827

Box 1, folder 12, account with Leon Macomber, 1830, 1833, 1836

Oversize Folder 2, Joseph Rotch, cont.

Box 1, folder 13, account with Penniman & Whiting, 1833

Box 1, folder 13, account with Read & Thornton, 1827

Box 1, folder 13, account with Joshua Richmond, 1836

Box 1, folder 14, account with B. & T. Sanford, 1830, 1832, 1833

Box 1, folder 14, account with Oliver Swain, 1828

Box 1, folder 15, account with Elisha Thornton & Son, 1829, 1832, 1833

Box 1, folder 16, account with James Wady, 1831, 1832, 1836

Box 1, folder 16, account with Bennett Wilcox & Co., 1828, 1831, 1833

Box 1, folder 16, account with Abraham Wood, 1827, 1829

Box 1, folder 17, account with Fish & Grinnell, 1830–1831

Oversize folder 3, William Rotch Jr. and William R. Rotch

Box 2, folder 5, Receipts, D–W, 1846–1847

Box 3, folder 3, household accounts, 1846–1847

Box 3, folder 9, From Abjeh D. Cook, 1858

Box 3, folder 10, Receipts, A, 1847, 1858

Box 3, folder 12, W. R. Rotch to William Canwell, 1846

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Box 3, folder 21, Receipts, C, 1838, 1846

Box 3, folder 21, account with William Maxfield, 1838

Box 3, folder 28, account with S. Wood & Son, 1846, 1847

Oversize folder 4, James Arnold Estate

Box 5, folder 1, will

Box 5, folder 3, codicils to will

Box 5, folder 4, account summaries

Box 6, folder 1, investment summaries, 1866

Box 6, folder 1, investment summaries—bonds, 1866

Box 6, folder 1, investment summaries, memorandum of notes receivable, 1866

Box 6, folder 1, investment summaries, claim v. Edmond Taber, 1861

Box 6, folder 12, Ship *Arnolda*, 1866

Box 6, folder 34, real estate, Michigan

Box 6, folder 35, investments in Michigan

Box 6, folder 37, investments: real estate, Budlong & Thayer, Steven Bill

Box 7, folder 4, list of tenants, 1860

Box 7, folder 6, Estate of John Finkel, 1865–1866

Box 7, folder 27, Sarah Arnold Estate: bequests, Probate Court, account

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