

Toy Exhibit Wraps Up 2024



Did you know there was once a Monopoly-style board game called “Abingdon*opoly” that featured local streets and attractions? Did you ever play with a Fisher-Price Family Farm, get a musical instrument or read about Gene Autry’s adventures?



The Historical Society is finishing 2024 with an exhibit entitled “Toys - Past and Present.” The display features dozens of antique toys that entertained kids as Christmas gifts for past generations.

What was your best Christmas gift as a child? Even if it’s not on display, this exhibit is bound to bring back memories of your own favorites.

The exhibit is free and open to the public from 10 am to 4 pm Tuesday through Friday and from 11 to 3 on Saturdays through December 14.



**OUR LIBRARY WILL BE CLOSED AFTER
DECEMBER 14
AND WILL REOPEN ON
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4**



“Home Improvements” Underway

The joy of operating our own building comes with the same challenges that home owners experience. Maintenance is a never-ending issue, and eventually expensive repairs need to be tackled.

The Historical Society has four bay windows on the first floor that have seen better days. From broken glass to deteriorated woodwork, there's no easy fix other than just replacing them altogether. And that's what the Board has decided to do.



Work began on the first three of the windows before Thanksgiving and will be finished over the next few weeks. We've applied for, and expect to receive, a grant from the Town of Abingdon that will cover most of the cost of the first three windows. The fourth will wait until we find out if we'll be able to install a badly-needed elevator to the second floor in its place.

The new windows will keep our utility bills in check and prevent ongoing damage to the woodwork. They'll also make our place on Main Street more attractive to the community and our patrons.

We're only able to tackle these projects with support from our dues-paid members and loyal volunteers. We want you to be proud of your facility! Thank you for your ongoing support.



Bonner Scholars A Blessing

The Society continues to benefit from its relationship with Emory & Henry College University.

This fall, E&H senior Abbey Carbonaro, a Bonner scholar, has volunteered in our Media Center with indexing and cataloguing. An Art Studio and History double major from Bristol VA with a certificate in Public History, Abbey has helped us catch up with backlogged additions to our database. Our staff had nothing but good things to say about her dedication and quality of work.

The Bonner program connects students with civic engagement programs that help the community while providing students with valuable experience connected to their majors.

We wish Abbey the best in her future endeavors, and we look forward to the next generation of Bonner scholars. Thank you, Abbey!



Our own Dan Smith faced the fearsome crowd of Trick or Treaters during Abingdon's popular Main Street event in October. Thanks for braving the onslaught and making us look good in the community, Dan!



The Historical Society's annual October program at Sinking Spring Cemetery, "An Evening With The Spirits," drew a large crowd again this year, raising over \$300 for the Society's operations.

As the dearly departed manifested themselves during the evening, the plot included a reenactment of a wedding, a little scandal and lots of intrigue. A special guest was author Greg Lilly, whose novel "Abingdon's Boardinghouse Murder" inspired much of the script. One of the highlights of the evening was young Shep Parsons, who tried without success to help the wayward George Wertz find his grave.

We appreciate all the volunteers who made the event a success, and the public who showed up in support.

Photos by Shana Parsons

The Society In Social Media

The Society continues to extend our outreach to the public in new ways, including social media.

Our **YouTube** channel now includes a collection of 44 videos, including a recording of the April *Conversation with Jefferson and Lafayette* and several dozen videos of veterans with Washington County roots talking about their service. We've also added video on African American history. Thanks to Paul Derden, Julianne Miles and Lynn Bennett for your volunteer efforts.

Our **"Family Reunion Project"** now has its own web address, https://hswcv.org/a2family_reunion.php. We'll be adding new caterers, venues and lodging options in coming weeks for folks planning their family get-togethers here.

Our **Facebook** group still continues to grow. We now have 12,217 participants who generate a lively discussion, ask questions and share photos about ancestors and history. We also regularly list upcoming events on our Facebook page. If you're not on board yet, join us at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/HSWCV> or just search for us by name.

There's a lot of local history to explore!



New Historical Markers

A new historical marker was unveiled in Glade Spring in November marking the site of the Glade Spring School for local African American students. The school provided education for grades 1 through 7 from 1917 to 1965.

This is the 20th historical marker in Washington County. The markers are a joint project between Virginia Department of Transportation and the Department of Historic Resources.

Another marker will be installed in February in front of the William King house in Abingdon, where William Clark and Meriwether Lewis visited over two hundred years ago.

Photo by Julianne Miles

Donations of Items

August 1 through October 31, 2024

Navy WWII newsletters, "The Pointer" and Everett Phillips collection	Anonymous	
Damascus High yearbooks and photo albums; list of graduates 1926-1964	Bobby Hand	Bristol VA
Special Report - Preservation of Revolutionary War Veteran Gravesites	Pat Hatfield	Abingdon VA
Smyth Co. Order Books #4 (1838-1840) and #5 (1841-1843)	Jack Hockett	Newark DE
1928 Virginia Intermont yearbook and diploma	Kenneth Kestner	Abingdon VA
Books and publications about Abingdon, Glade Spring and Meadowview	Bill Kittrell	Abingdon VA
Newspaper clippings from 1894, 1895, 1896 and 1915	Esther Land	Abingdon VA
Yearbooks from Emory & Henry, Virginia Intermont, Abingdon High, Martha Washington College, White Cap and Stonewall Jackson; Early 1900s postcards of Abingdon; History of SWVA by Summers	Janna McConnell	Abingdon VA
Painting of Brumley Gap Church by Minnie Ma	Lue Wise Murray	Bristol VA
Papers from David G. Thomas property, late 1800s.	Kevin Reap	Abingdon VA
Washington Co. WWII service record; Ashe Co. NC Heritage, vols. I & II; History of Hassinger Lumber Co.; Trains, the magazine of railroading	Susan Robertson	Henrico VA
Epson scanner for Media Center	Linda Summers	Abingdon VA
History of Montgomery Cemetery in Denton Valley	Michelle Thomas	Abingdon VA
Love seat and work table	Tim Webb/Travel Shop	Abingdon VA
17th VA Infantry regimental history, signed 1st edition by Lee Wallace Jr.	Stephen Wolfsberger	Abingdon VA

Monetary Donations

J. Phil Clark	Easley SC
Melissa Kestner-Clay and David Clay	Abingdon VA
Patricia Rutherford Couto	Mechanicsville VA
Lori Grubb	Bristol VA
Carolyn Ryburn	Glade Spring VA

Memorial and Honorarium Monetary Donations

In Memory of R. L. Knott III, Life Member
Pattie Treakle Arwood - Chesterfield VA

Memorials and charitable gifts in honor of friends and loved ones are great ways to create a lasting commemoration of a life well lived, a birthday or other life event.

Gifts and memorials made to the Historical Society are tax deductible and provide essential support for the Society. The Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Contributions may be made by check and mailed to the Society, PO Box 484, Abingdon VA 24212 or online through our website, hswcv.org. Contributions and any items to be donated may be brought to our office at 341 West Main, Abingdon.

Items to be donated are appreciated, but sometimes will be declined if they do not meet our mission, are overly bulky, or are duplicates of items we already possess.

The Society has several membership levels. Individual or family membership dues are \$35 a year, and one-time dues for lifetime membership are \$350. Student memberships are \$10 a year; they're a great gift for a child or grandchild with an interest in history. Business memberships are \$50 a year, or \$450 for ten years. All members will receive our annual *Bulletin*, our newsletters (in either digital or hard copy format) and occasional email updates throughout the year.

Thanks to all our donors for your support!

Almost-Forgotten History - The Fincastle Resolutions

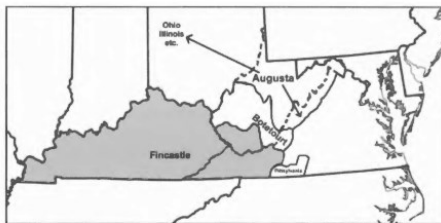
January 20, 1775

Mention the American Revolution, and most people think of events in Boston and Philadelphia along the Atlantic coastline. But Southwest Virginia played an often-overlooked role in our drive for independence. We're approaching the 250th anniversary of the adoption of the Fincastle Resolutions - almost lost to history, but the first call in America for the separation of church and state.

Fincastle County today is but a small fragment of its original size. It was created in December 1772 out of

Botetourt County, and included all of present-day Kentucky, Southwest Virginia and southern West Virginia. In December 1776, the new Virginia General Assembly created

Washington County out of Fincastle County - one of the first locales named for the popular new general of the American revolution.



Fincastle County (shaded) and surrounding Virginia counties in 1774-1775. Source: Glanville, The Smithfield Review, Vol. XIV, p. 71.

Four months after the Boston Tea Party took place in December 1773, the British parliament adopted what were derisively called the “Coercive Acts” or “Intolerable Acts” by the colonists. The acts were meant to punish Boston by blockading Boston’s harbor, and to send a message to the other colonies that resistance to parliamentary authority would not be tolerated.

In support, on May 24, 1774 the Virginia House of Burgesses called for a day of fasting and prayer for June 1 - the date the port of Boston was to be closed. Two

One of the best sources of information on the Fincastle resolutions is an article written by Dr. James Glanville and published in *The Smithfield Review*, Vol. XIV, 2010. Glanville (1941-2019), a British native who came to the United States in 1962, was a professor of chemistry at Virginia Tech until his retirement in 2004. He then took up a second career as a student of history focusing on Southwest Virginia. days later, the British Governor, John Murray, Earl of

Dunmore, dissolved the House of Burgesses. On May 27 most of the burgesses called for a convention of all the burgesses to decide how to proceed. The convention, which had never been done before, was to begin on August 1 to give the delegates “an Opportunity of collecting their sense of their respective counties.”

Over the next ten months, at least 59 of the 65 jurisdictions in Virginia adopted resolutions and forwarded them to Williamsburg. Fincastle was the forty-sixth of the 59.

According to Dr. Glanville, the county resolutions occurred in two waves. The first batch of at least 40 came in June and July in anticipation of the August convention, and generally expressed support for the people of Boston while criticizing Parliament. Most concluded their meetings with toasts to the King, his Queen, his family and in support of reconciliation with Britain. All of the counties sent a record of their actions to Williamsburg to be published in one of the *Virginia Gazettes*.

At the same time, the people of Fincastle, on the western frontier, had other issues to address. On May 13 - eleven days before being dissolved - the House of Burgesses authorized Lord Dunmore to muster a military response against the Mingo and Shawnee Indians in present-day Ohio with the intent of ending attacks on frontier settlers. Even though settlement was prohibited by treaties with England, the Virginia House of Burgesses had been encouraging settlement through land grants. By the end of September, Dunmore was personally leading a force of about 1,500 men down the Ohio River while Andrew Lewis was heading north from Fincastle and Botetourt Counties with another thousand men. The Battle of Point Pleasant on October 10 forced the Indians to retreat into Ohio, and the Virginians followed them. The Treaty of Camp Charlotte was concluded on October 20, and the men prepared to head home.

Meanwhile, in Philadelphia the First Continental Congress convened in September and October 1774; seven Virginians attended. Thomas Jefferson’s *A Summary View of the Rights of British America*, published in August, drove the discussion. The Congress formed an “Association” of all the colonies and recommended the election in each county and town of a committee to support the Association.

By November 4, the Virginians from Point Pleasant met at Fort Gower across the Ohio from land owned by



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Historical Society of
Washington County, VA

The barrack-master's accounts, for the expenditure of the money granted last year for the supply of the King's troops, shall be laid before you, as soon as they can be prepared.

Gentlemen of the Council, and Gentlemen of the Assembly,

It would argue not only a great want of duty to his Majesty, but of regard to the good people of this province, were I, on this occasion, to pass over in silence the late alarming transactions in this and the neighbouring colonies, or not endeavour to prevail on you to exert yourselves in preventing those mischiefs to this country which, without your timely interposition, will, in all probability, be the consequence.

It is not for me to decide on the particular merits of the dispute between Great Britain and her colonies, nor do I mean to censure those, who conceive themselves aggrieved, for aiming at a redress of their grievances. It is a duty they owe themselves, their country, and their posterity.

All that I would wish to guard you against is the giving any countenance or encouragement to that destructive mode of proceeding which has been unhappily adopted in part by some of the inhabitants of this colony, and has been carried so far in others as totally to subvert their former constitution. It has already struck at the authority of one of the branches of the legislature, in a particular manner. And if you, Gentlemen of the Assembly, should give your approbation to transactions of this nature, you will do as much as lies in your power to destroy that form of government of which you are an important part, and which it is your duty, by all lawful means, to preserve. To you, your constituents have intrusted a peculiar guardianship of their rights and privileges; you are their legal representatives; and you cannot, without a manifest breach of your trust, suffer any body of men, in this or any of the other provinces, to usurp and exercise any of the powers vested in you by the constitution. It behoves you particularly, who must be constitutionally supposed to speak the sense of the people at large, to be extremely cautious in consenting to any act whereby you may engage them as parties in, and make them answerable for, measures which may have a tendency to involve them in difficulties far greater than those they aim to avoid.

Besides, there is not, Gentlemen, the least necessity, consequently there will not be the least excuse, for your running any such risks on the present occasion. If you are really disposed to represent to the King any inconveniences you conceive yourselves to lie under, or to make any propositions on the present state of America, I can assure you, from the best authority, that such representations, or propositions, will be properly attended to, and certainly have greater weight coming from each colony, in its separate capacity, than in a channel of the propriety and legality of which there may be much doubt.

You have now pointed out to you, Gentlemen, two roads: One evidently leading to peace, happiness, and a restoration of the public tranquillity; the other inevitably conducting you to anarchy, misery, and all the horrors of a civil war. Your wisdom, your prudence, your regard for the true interests of the people, will be best known when you have shewn to which road you give the preference. If to the former, you will probably afford satisfaction to the moderate, the sober, and the discreet part of your constituents. If to the latter, you will perhaps, for a time, give pleasure to the warm, the rash, and the inconsiderate among them; who, I would willingly hope, violent as is the temper of the present times, are not even now the majority. But it may be well for you to remember, should any calamity hereafter befall them, from your compliance with their inclinations, the sober, the wise, as you ought, the dictates of your own judgment, that the consequences of

their returning to a proper sense of their conduct may prove deservedly fatal to yourselves.

I shall say no more at present on this disagreeable subject, but only to repeat an observation I made to a former Assembly on a similar occasion: "Every breach of the constitution, whether it proceeds from the Crown or the people, is, in its effects, equally destructive to the rights of both. It is the duty, therefore, of those who are intrusted with government, to be equally careful in guarding against encroachments from the one as the other. But it is (says one of the wisest of men) a most infallible symptom of the dangerous state of liberty when the chief men of a free country show a greater regard to popularity than to their own judgment."

WILLIAMSBURG, February 10.

FINCASLE, Jan. 20, 1775.

IN obedience to the resolves of the Continental Congress, a meeting of the freeholders of this county was held this day, who, after approving of the association framed by that august body in behalf of all the colonies, and subscribing thereto, proceeded to the election of a committee, to see the same carried punctually into execution, when the following Gentlemen were nominated: Reverend Charles Cummings, Colonel William Preston, Colonel William Christian, Captain Stephen Trigg, Major Arthur Campbell, Major William Inglis, Captain Walter Crockett, Captain John Montgomery, Captain James McGavock, Captain William Campbell, Captain Thomas Madison, Captain Daniel Smith, Captain William Russell, Captain Evan Shelby, and Lieutenant William Edmondson.

After the election, the committee made choice of Colonel WILLIAM CHRISTIAN for their chairman, and appointed Mr. David Campbell to be clerk.

The following address was then unanimously agreed to by the people of the county, and is as follows:

To the Honourable Peyton Randolph, Esq; Richard Henry Lee, George Washington, Patrick Henry, junior, Richard Bland, Benjamin Harrison, and Edmund Pendleton, Esquires, the Delegates from this colony who attended the Continental Congress held at Philadelphia.

Gentlemen,
HAD it not been for our remote situation, and the Indian war which we were lately engaged in, to chastise those cruel and savage people for the many murders and depredations they have committed amongst us (now happily terminated, under the auspices of our present worthy Governor, his Excellency the Right Honourable the Earl of Dunmore) we should before this time have made known to you our thankfulness for the very important services you have rendered to your country, in conjunction with the worthy Delegates from the other provinces. Your noble efforts for reconciling the Mother Country and the Colonies, on rational and constitutional principles, and your pacific, steady, and uniform conduct in that arduous work, entitle you to the esteem of all British America, and will immortalize you in the annals of your country. We heartily concur in your resolutions, and shall, in every instance, strictly and invariably adhere thereto.

We assure you, Gentlemen, and all our countrymen, that we are a people whose hearts overflow with love and duty to our lawful sovereign George III. whose illustrious house, for several successive reigns, have been the guardians of the civil and religious rights and liberties of British subjects, as settled at the glorious Revolution; that we are willing to risk our lives in the service of his Majesty, for the support of the Protestant religion, and the rights and liberties of his subjects, as they have been established by compact, law, and ancient charters.

We are heartily grieved at the differences which now subsist between the parent state and the colonies, and most ardently wish to see harmony restored, on an equitable basis, and by the most lenient measures that can be devised by the heart of man.

Many of us, and our forefathers, left our native land, considering it as a kingdom subjected to inordinate power, and greatly abridged of its liberties. We crossed the Atlantick, and explored this then uncultivated wilderness, bordering on many nations of savages, and surrounded by mountains almost inaccessible to any but those very savages, who have incessantly been committing barbarities and depredations on us since our first settling the country. These fatigues and dangers we patiently encountered, supported by the pleasing hope of enjoying those rights and liberties which had been granted to Virginians and were denied us in our native country, and of transmitting them inviolate to our posterity. But even to these remote regions the hand of admitted and unconstitutional power hath pursued us, to strip us of that liberty and property with which God, nature, and the rights of humanity, have vested us. We are ready and willing to contribute all in our power for the support of his Majesty's government, if applied to constitutionally, and when the grants are made by our own representatives; but cannot think of submitting our liberty or property to the power of a venal British parliament, or to the will of a corrupt ministry.

We by no means desire to shake off our duty or allegiance to our lawful sovereign, but on the contrary shall ever glory in being the loyal subjects of a Protestant prince, descended from such illustrious progenitors, so long as we can enjoy the free exercise of our religion, as Protestants, and our liberties and properties, as British subjects.

But if no pacific measures shall be proposed or adopted by Great Britain, and our enemies will attempt to dragoon us out of those inestimable privileges which we are entitled to as subjects, and to reduce us to a state of slavery, we declare, that we are deliberately and resolutely determined never to surrender them to any power upon earth, but at the expense of our lives.

These are our real, though unpolished sentiments, of liberty and loyalty, and in them we are resolved to live and die.

We are, Gentlemen, with the most perfect esteem and regard, your most obedient servants.

Queries for the COLLECTOR of the upper district of James River.

HOW comes it to pass, Sir, that you, contrary to your instructions, should presume to import and sell goods, not only in partnership with others, but on your own bottom, and by consignment likewise?

Do not your instructions run in the following terms, viz. "You shall not, either in your own name, or the name of or names of any other person or persons, or in company or partnership with any other, directly or indirectly, trade as a merchant, for yourself, or a factor or agent for any other, in or for any goods, wares, or merchandize?"

If you act in this manner (which it can be proved you have, and still continue the iniquitous practice) ought you not to be superseded, and a more worthy man appointed in your stead?

Is not the office of a paltry Exciseman in England a much more proper occupation for you than a Collector of his Majesty's customs, who is generally dubbed with the title of Esquire?

How came you, after delivering up some goods, which you lately imported, to the Williamsburg Committee (as was your duty) and after one of the members of it became security for the forthcoming of the goods, to have the meanness and audacity

Freedom of the press not only was a high priority of the Bill of Rights, but newspapers did the most to spread the word about the American revolution.

The first newspaper to be published in Virginia, in 1736, was named the Virginia Gazette. Over the years, several publications in Williamsburg carried the Gazette name, sometimes simultaneously. Alexander Purdie, who previously was publisher of the original Gazette, began a separate paper by that name on February 3, 1775 and operated it until his death in 1779. The February 10 edition carried the Fincastle resolution on page 3. Purdie later scooped the others by publishing Thomas Payne's Common Sense in February 1776, and news of the Declaration of Independence just eight days after July 4.

In British custom, "gazettes" were considered the official record, giving the paper an air of credibility. When Virginia's General Assembly ordered their resolutions printed "in the Gazette" or "in the Virginia Gazette," it wasn't clear which paper was supposed to get the business. But a paper by any other name was out of luck.

Image source: The Rockefeller Library collections at Colonial Williamsburg.

George Washington before returning home. As Daniel Morgan wrote,

After we had beat [the Indians] and reduced them to order and were on our way home, we heard, at the mouth of the Hocking, on the Ohio, that hostilities were offered to our brethren, the people of Boston. We as an army immediately formed ourselves into a society, pledging our honors to assist the Bostonians, in case of a serious breach, which did take place on the 19th of the following April at Lexington.

The Fort Gower resolution was published on Dec. 22 in one of the *Virginia Gazettes* in Williamsburg and read in the House of Lords in March of 1775. Signed only by the company clerk, the resolution expressed loyalty to the King and praising Lord Dunmore before pledging support for America's "just Rights and Privileges." But Capt. William Russell and probably several others who later signed the Fincastle Resolutions were present at Fort Gower, and all undoubtedly knew what was in the Fort Gower resolution.

By November, the formation of standing Virginia county committees began to take place - about the time the men from Point Pleasant returned to their homes.

The second wave of county resolutions, as Glanville described it, followed the October 1774 call for feedback by the First Continental Congress and cited that charge. What Glanville finds remarkable is that the resolutions of the four western counties - Fincastle, Augusta, Botetourt and Pittsylvania - pledged their lives in the cause of American liberty.

We don't know the process by which these fifteen men were chosen, or whether some were excluded or unable to attend. We don't know the extent to which their resolution reflected the public sentiment, or whether the public even knew what was taking place. We don't know how much debate took place among them in arriving at the final words of the published document, or even who wrote them.

The Fincastle men met on January 20 in the dead of winter, probably at James McGavock's ordinary at Fort Chiswell which was centrally located to their homes. They elected William Christian, brother-in-law of Patrick Henry, as their chairman¹. All, except for Parson Cummings, cited their militia ranks: two colonels, two majors, nine captains and a lieutenant.

The Fincastle freeholders specifically directed their "address" to the seven members of the Virginia delegation who had attended that congress. After praising the delegates (and Lord Dunmore) for their service, they expressed their allegiance to George III and expressed hope of seeing "harmony restored, on an equitable basis."

We are ready and willing to contribute all in our power for the support of his Majesty's government, if applied to constitutionally, and when the grants are made by our own representatives; but cannot think of submitting our liberty or property to the power of a venal British parliament, or to the will of a corrupt Ministry....

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But at that point the freeholders drew a line in the sand.

"But if no pacific measures shall be proposed or adopted by Great Britain, and our enemies will attempt to dragoon us out of these inestimable privileges which we are entitled to as subjects, and to reduce us to a state of slavery, we declare, that we are deliberately and resolutely determined never to surrender them to any power upon earth, but at the expense of our lives.

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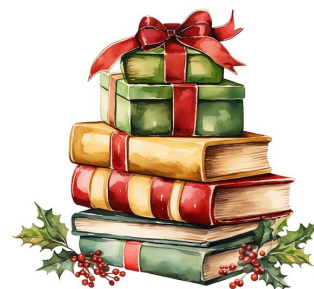
This was the first of the resolutions that specifically tied their complaints to the free exercise of their chosen religion, and pledged to risk their lives for that cause. It was a key step in the process that led to American independence from Great Britain. Whole books could be written about the ancient conflicts between the Church of England and the Protestants, and notably the Scots-Irish who populated the western frontier versus the Anglicans on the coast. But it's clear that, for these men from Southwest Virginia, freedom of religion was a matter for which they were willing to sacrifice their lives.

¹Christian was likely the person who delivered a copy of the Fincastle resolution to the *Virginia Gazette* in Williamsburg. Page 4 of the same February 10 edition included a story in which Christian recounted the battle at Point Pleasant. It began, "Last Sunday night Colonel William Christian arrived in town from Fincastle..."

Christian, William Campbell and Thomas Madison were all brothers in law of Patrick Henry, one of the seven delegates to the First Continental Congress. William Russell became the second husband of Elizabeth Henry after Campbell's death. Madison was a second cousin to future President James Madison.



The Historical Society
of Washington County, Virginia, Inc.
P.O. Box 484
Abingdon, VA 24212-0484



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