



AGS Ezine

Newsletter of the Arkansas Genealogical Society
Vol. 20, No. 8, October 2025
Sara White, Editor

Note from the Editor:

Happy Family History Month, fellow genealogists! In September 2001, Senator Orrin Hatch (R., UT) introduced a resolution to designate October as *Family History Month*, a motion that Congress passed with 84 sponsors. Two Arkansas libraries are celebrating by offering **free** family history kits and other materials. We're also celebrating this month with our annual conference on **October 18** featuring Thomas MacEntee. Register or find a watch party at argensoc.org/conference. More details on page 16!

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Arkansas Genealogical Society

October 2025

Kitchen Roundtable Talk



Expert Advice for Writing Your Family History

Our Zoom discussion will be presented on **Tuesday, October 21, at 6:30 p.m.**, free of charge.

Please join us for our free Zoom presentation! Learn expert tips from a professional writer in the Genealogy field, Carla Maitland. Carla is currently the President of the Tennessee Genealogical Society and is generously willing to share her expertise, detailing the methods of writing your own story and that of your ancestors.

Carla Maitland has several years of experience in researching family history for herself and for others. Her true passion is writing about the findings that result from the investigative procedure. I enjoy giving presentations about those experiences and about other historical events and research techniques, often speaking to various genealogical groups and lineage societies in the Greater Memphis and Mid-South Area. She is currently involved in presenting webinars for the Tennessee Genealogical Society. She is an active member of 12 genealogical societies and five lineage societies across the nation.

[Join us online via Zoom.](#)

Our monthly **Kitchen Roundtable Talks** cover diverse genealogical topics and methodologies, sparking lively online discussions among our engaged participants. This platform is a unique opportunity to establish meaningful connections with fellow genealogy enthusiasts, cultivate new friendships within the community, and link up with kindred spirits who share our passion for research.

We enthusiastically welcome suggestions from all participants for topics of interest and encourage volunteers to step forward as discussion leaders for subjects close to their hearts. As this initiative evolves, we anticipate refining it based on our collective experiences. Your active participation and invaluable feedback remain pivotal in shaping the future of our endeavors. For more information on our discussion topics, go to argensoc.org/kitchen.

October Events

Saturday, October 11

Nuestras Raíces—Hispanic Genealogy FamilySearch Workshop

1:00 p.m.–2:00 p.m.

Miami-Dade Public Library System

[Virtual via Zoom](#)

Monday, October 13

Volunteer Genealogy Assistance with D.A.R. Members

5:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m.

Fayetteville Public Library, Genealogy Library

401 W. Mountain Street, Fayetteville, AR

No registration required

Brick Wall Challenge, Favorite Rabbit Holes, & Genealogy Serendipity!

6:30 p.m.–8:00 p.m.

Heritage Seekers

[Virtual](#)

Tuesday, October 14

DNA Discoveries

5:30 p.m.–7:30 p.m.

Fort Smith Public Library, Campbell Board Room

3201 Rogers Avenue, Fort Smith, AR

No registration required

Wednesday, October 15

Break Down Genealogy Brick Walls: Drop-in Genealogy Assistance

3:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.

Fayetteville Public Library, Genealogy Library

401 W. Mountain Street, Fayetteville, AR

No registration required

Wednesday, October 15

Finding Family Facts: Start Your Genealogy Journey

10:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Roberts Library of Arkansas History and Art, Room 204

401 President Clinton Avenue, Little Rock, AR

[Register online](#)

October Events

Monday, October 20

Volunteer Genealogy Assistance with D.A.R. Members

5:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m.

Fayetteville Public Library, Genealogy Library

401 W. Mountain Street, Fayetteville, AR

No registration required

Thursday, October 23

Personal Archiving

12:00 p.m.–1:30 p.m.

Roberts Library of Arkansas History and Art

[Virtual](#)

Monday, October 27

Volunteer Genealogy Assistance with D.A.R. Members

5:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m.

Fayetteville Public Library, Genealogy Library

401 W. Mountain Street, Fayetteville, AR

No registration required

Unlocking Clues in Deed Records: Essential Strategies for Genealogical Research

6:30 p.m.–8:00 p.m.

Heritage Seekers

[Virtual](#)

Wednesday, October 29

Armchair Historians: Secret Lives of Church Ladies

5:00 p.m.–6:00 p.m.

William F. Laman Public Library, Genealogy Room

2801 Orange St, North Little Rock, AR

No registration required

October Events

Thursday, October 30

Storytelling, County GIS Maps & Land Patents

12:00 p.m.–1:00 p.m.

ProjectKin

[Virtual via Zoom](#)

Uncovering Truth Through DNA

5:30 p.m.–6:30 p.m.

The Genealogy Center at Allen County Public Library

[Virtual via Zoom](#)

Unlocking Clues in Deed Records: Essential Strategies for Genealogical Research

6:30 p.m.–8:00 p.m.

Heritage Seekers

[Virtual](#)

Friday, October 31

Witch Hunts and Hidden Truths

8:00 a.m.–9:00 a.m.

The National Archives (UK)

[Virtual](#)



October Events

Cemetery Conservation Workshop

Saturday, October 25, 2025

9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Rockport Cemetery

Cemetery Drive and U.S. Highway 270, Malvern, AR

The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program will be hosting a hands-on cemetery preservation workshop on Saturday, October 25, 2025. The free workshop will feature the basics of cemetery conservation, including instruction by Rusty Brenner of Texas Cemetery Restoration and will address common concerns in preservation and maintenance of cemeteries and offer hands-on training.

Attendees are encouraged to participate in cleaning, making basic repairs, and the leveling and straightening of gravestones.

Limited to 40 attendees

Schedule of Events

9:00 a.m. Introductions and workshop overview; cleaning, leveling, and basic repairs

12:00 p.m. Lunch on the grounds provided by AHPP

1:00 p.m. Continue cleaning, leveling, and basic repairs

4:00 p.m. Event ends

Register by contacting Holly Hope:

(501) 324-9148

(501) 681-2120 (day of workshop)

holly.hope@arkansas.gov

October is National Family History Month

Celebrate Family History Month

*Family History Month Activity Pack at
William F. Laman Public Library*

Celebrate Family History Month with grab-and-go style packets bursting with color and fun for the whole family! You can finish them in the library or enjoy them at home!

Activity packs are available each Friday while supplies last and are appropriate for all ages (though children who cannot read independently may require assistance). Some activities are encouraged to be completed as a group! Activity Packs can be found in the Laman Library Genealogy Room or at the Laman Children's or Teen's Circulation Desks.

All Day Every Friday in October at 2801 Orange Street, North Little Rock, AR

*Adult and Children's Family History Starter Kits
at the Fort Smith Library*

In celebration of Family History Month, the Genealogy Department at the Fort Smith Main Library is giving away Adult and Children's Family History Starter Kits. In addition, we are also giving away a basket of Genealogy Goodies. Stop by the Genealogy Department to enter for your chance to win and pick up your starter kit.

Available All October at 3201 Rogers Avenue, Fort Smith, AR

Planting the Seeds

Turning Cemetery Research into Family Adventure

By Regan Richardson

A question that haunts many genealogists and family historians is: *How can I get younger generations interested in genealogy, especially when many older generations don't seem interested?*

I recently found an unexpected answer during a school break when my nephew and three great nieces were staying with me while their parents worked. Rather than allowing them to watch TV all day, I saw an opportunity for hands-on genealogy education. I printed the FindAGrave photo requests for our nearest cemetery, gathered a clipboard, a pen, and highlighters, loaded the children into the car, and transformed a routine research task into an adventure.

Upon arriving at the cemetery, we huddled together like a team preparing for a mission. I reviewed the surnames we were seeking and explained our systematic approach of checking each row rather than wandering randomly. The structured plan gave them purpose, and once they understood their task, enthusiasm took over.

The children naturally organized themselves: my seven-year-old great-niece paired with her 12-year-old cousin, while the two ten-year-old great-nieces formed another search team. Their excitement was palpable as they called out surnames from our list, waiting for my confirmation before moving on to the next discovery. The repetition of family names throughout the day subtly embedded genealogical awareness in their young minds.

Under perfect weather conditions, their energy and sharp eyes helped us cover approximately an eighth of the cemetery—far more ground than I could have managed alone in a single visit. Though we didn't locate any of the specific headstones requested by FindAGrave users, the expedition yielded something more valuable: engagement with family history.

Before departing, I guided them to the resting places of their great-grandparents and great-great-grandparents. Standing before these tangible connections to their past, I shared stories that brought these ancestors to life. The children listened with genuine interest, perhaps seeing for the first time how they fit into a larger historical narrative.

Sometimes the most effective way to spark genealogical interest isn't through charts and documents, but through tactile experiences that transform family history from an abstract concept to a tangible adventure. I know I'll have eager volunteers ready for our next heritage hunt. By making genealogy interactive, purposeful, and social, we create memories around the very act of remembering—planting seeds of heritage that may well blossom into lifelong curiosity about their roots.

Can I Use That in My Genealogy? What You Should Know About Copyright

By Thomas MacEntee

What Is Copyright?

“Copyright is a form of protection grounded in the U.S. Constitution and granted by law for original works of authorship fixed in a tangible medium of expression. Copyright covers both published and unpublished works.”

The paragraph above is from the U.S. Copyright Office’s Frequently Asked Questions about Copyright webpage at copyright.gov/help/faq/. It is a general statement as to what copyright covers here in the United States. But as they say, “the Devil is in the details,” and understanding exactly what is and isn’t covered and what you can and can’t use as a genealogist requires quite a bit of guidance.

What Does a Copyright Bestow to the Owner of a Work?

A copyright does not convey magical powers, nor was it meant to serve as a “reward” for one’s labor in creating the work. A copyright conveys rights, such as:

- The right to reproduce the copyrighted work.
- The right to prepare derivative works based upon the copyrighted work.
- The right to publish or distribute copies of the copyrighted work to the public.
- The right to perform the work in a public arena.
- The right to display the work publicly.

Basically, when you own the copyright to a work, you can control how that work is used by yourself and others. This includes genealogy books, written family stories, and even audio and video recordings.

When to Worry about Copyright

Too often, genealogists worry about using certain published and unpublished materials during the research process to the point of impacting their progress in finding ancestors. A mantra that has helped me: “Don’t worry. Be educated.”

Don’t let the fear of using certain materials in both your research and a published or unpublished report or book keep you from breaking down brick walls or serving your genealogy clients.

Can I Use That in My Genealogy? What You Should Know About Copyright

How Are You Using a Copyrighted Work?

This is the first and most important question to ask yourself: What am I going to do with the information I take from possibly copyrighted works? If your research will remain unpublished, for the most part, your worries are few. However, if you have a blog or you are publishing a family history book, you do need to fully understand what is and isn't allowed in terms of usage.

Facts Can't Be Copyrighted

Birth dates, death dates, locations of events, etc., are not covered by copyright. So, as a genealogist, you can copy this type of information and use it freely in your research, reports, family trees, etc.

What Works Are Copyrighted? Some Gray Areas

It is not all black and white when it comes to what is and isn't covered by copyright. Due to a myriad of changes in the US copyright laws and court rulings, assume that there are exceptions to even the most obvious provisions.

- **Information from a gravestone visited in person in 1982.** Facts cannot be copyrighted. No permission needed.
- **Information from a gravestone from a photograph dated 1982.** An extraction of the facts from the photo cannot be copyrighted. No permission needed.
- **A photograph of a gravestone dated 1982.** Assuming the person who took the photo is still alive, permission is required. Even if the photographer died in 1982, the heirs of the photographer's estate may still claim copyright.
- **An obituary published in a newspaper dated 1927.** The obituary is in the public domain, and no permission is needed. The cut-off date for public domain works, in general, is January 1, 1928.
- **An obituary published in a newspaper dated 1942.** This depends on who exactly owns the work. Was it a work for hire? Was it written by a family member? Is the author still alive? Was there a copyright notice used? There are so many factors involved that more information is needed.
- **An unpublished poem or story dated 1900, written by Uncle Eustace.** Did the author die more than 70 years ago, meaning 1955 or earlier? If so, then no permission is needed and the work is in the public domain. For the most part, unpublished works are protected for 70 years after the death of the author.

Can I Use That in My Genealogy? What You Should Know About Copyright

- **A diary dated 1900 and written by your great-grandmother.** If unpublished and your great-grandmother died prior to 1942, then no permission is needed, and the work is in the public domain (the same rules as unpublished works and the death date of the author apply as above). If it was published prior to 1928, then the diary is in the public domain. If it was published after 1928, it depends upon whether a copyright notice was used and if the work was registered.
- **A diary dated 1960 and written by your grandmother.** Since the diary was written in 1960 and before her death, you would need to get permission from your grandmother if she is still living. If she died after the diary was written, you still should try to get permission from her heirs due to the “70 years after the death of the author” provision mentioned above.
- **A photograph of Uncle Albert from 1900.** Photos are a tricky area when it comes to copyright, which is not controlled by the owner or the subject of the photo, per se. Normally, it is the photographer—the creator of the work—and his or her heirs who control ownership of the work. And then again, it could be a work for hire with the person being photographed (by a professional photographer, let’s say) ultimately owning the work. Was the photo published? Then the provisions for published works apply. Was it unpublished? Then the “70 years after the death of the author” rules apply.
- **A photograph of Aunt Tilly from 1930.** If Aunt Tilly took the photo and she died in 1941, and the photo was never published, then yes, you should be able to use the photo without permission. But if Aunt Tilly died in 1960, see above for unpublished works and the death of the author.

How Long Does a Copyright Last?

This is a complicated question, as complicated as determining who owns the copyright to a work. As we’ve seen in the section above, the many changes to US copyright law have rendered the process of determining the length of copyright difficult, to say the least. You’ll need to gather all the information needed, such as whether a work was published or not, when the author died, whether a copyright notice was used, etc.

The Truth about Fair Use

For purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, or research, you are allowed to use portions of copyrighted works.

Can I Use That in My Genealogy? What You Should Know About Copyright

A useful summary:

- “It not only allows but encourages socially beneficial uses of copyrighted works such as teaching, learning, and scholarship. Without fair use, those beneficial uses—quoting from copyrighted works, providing multiple copies to students in class, creating new knowledge based on previously published knowledge—would be infringements. Fair use is the means for assuring a robust and vigorous exchange of copyrighted information.”
—Carrie Russell, American Library Association
- Put simply, copyright is not meant to interfere with or impede scholarly research. There is no “Fair Use law”—this is one of many “copyright urban legends” and bits of misinformation about US Copyright laws. There is no “magic formula” such as only using three lines of the work, or if it is on the Internet, it is free to use, etc.

Red Light/Green Light Test for Using Works

When you use other works for your genealogy research, basically, you need to use a multi-step litmus test on your usage. I call this my “red light, green light” test:

- Is the work in the public domain, royalty-free, or covered by a Creative Commons or similar license? If it is, green light and use the work! If not, see the next step.
- Does your use of the work constitute fair use? If it does, green light and use the work! If it doesn't, see the next step.
- Are you willing to get permission from the author to use the work or pay a licensing fee? If you are, green light and use the work based on the author's or licensing guidelines! If not, don't use the work.

If, after going through the test above, you still decide to use the work, you open yourself up to being served with a cease-and-desist notice or even a lawsuit related to your use of the copyrighted materials. I've found that until you've created your own original works and have had your copyright violated, you don't really appreciate the value of copyright.

Copyright Myths

Here are some common assumptions that many genealogists and others make about copyright and the use of published works:

- **It's on the Internet, so it must be free to use.** Not true, and one of the biggest myths perpetuated about copyright. Even unpublished works not posted to the Internet are covered by copyright.
- **There's no copyright notice. Author loses and I win!** The confusion here is that some works published between specific time periods are in the public domain if a specific type of notice wasn't included. Since March 1, 1989 works do not require a copyright notice.

Can I Use That in My Genealogy? What You Should Know About Copyright

- **The book I'm using as a source is out of print.** "Out of print" does not mean "in the public domain." The material may still be under copyright.
- **I can ask for permission later on.** It's not like asking for forgiveness; asking for permission after usage does not absolve you of copyright infringement liability.
- **I don't need to ask permission as long as I give credit to the author.** If you only give credit for a work, at least no one can call you a plagiarist, right? You still have to ask permission in order to protect yourself from violating copyright.
- **Someone else posted the original work in a forum, a group, or in a blog anonymously, so I'm good to go.** The same rules about "everything on the Internet is free to use" apply even if posted anonymously. In fact, items posted with a pseudonym or *nom de plume* can still be copyrighted.
- **I'm using the work for a non-profit organization or for educational purposes so I don't have to worry about asking for permission.** Not true. Many confuse this type of use with Fair Use, which depends on many factors, not just the type of organization using the work.

General Copyright Do's and Don'ts

- **Assume everything is copyrighted.** This is the best approach and until you can prove that either the work a) is in the public domain, royalty free or covered by a special license; or b) can be used according to Fair Use provisions; or c) can be used through permission or a licensing fee, then don't use it.
- **When in doubt, research or ask.** Use the Resources below or ask the owner of the work if and how the work can be used. Ignorance is not a valid excuse.
- **Cite your sources.** Not only do source citations serve you as a genealogist and help improve the research process, but for Fair Use purposes, you should make clear the name of the work, the author, and all pertinent details in your citation.
- **Don't fall prey to "copyright urban legends."** Misinformation abounds when it comes to copyright and especially which works can and can't be used and how. Educating yourself is protecting yourself.

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Can I Use That in My Genealogy? What You Should Know About Copyright

Resources

- [Attribution: It's the Right Thing to Do](#)
- [Bloggers' FAQ on Intellectual Property—Electronic Frontier Foundation](#)
- [Copy Right, Copy Sense](#)
- [Copyright & Fair Use - Stanford University Libraries](#)
- [Copyright Articles at The Legal Genealogist](#)
- [Copyright Genie](#)
- [Copyright Law of the United States \(Title 17\) – United States Copyright Office](#)
- [Copyright Renewal Database – Stanford University Libraries](#)
- [Creative Commons](#)
- [Debunking Copyright Myths – Copyright Alliance](#)
- [Digital Copyright Slider – American Library Association](#)
- [Duration of Copyright – United States Copyright Office](#)
- [Exceptions for Instructors eTool – American Library Association](#)
- [Fair Use Evaluator – American Library Association](#)
- [Quick Copyright Overview for Genealogists – Family Tree Magazine](#)
- [U.S. Copyright Office FAQs](#)

Make sure to register for our annual conference featuring Thomas MacEntee on October 18th at 9:00 a.m. More information on the conference and how to register or find a watch party at argensoc.org/conference

We Can't Do It Without You: A Call for Volunteers

Dear Members and Friends of the Arkansas Genealogical Society,

At the heart of every thriving genealogical community are dedicated volunteers—individuals who care deeply about preserving the stories of the past so future generations can discover them. Our society is powered by people just like you, and right now, we're growing—and we need your help.

Whether you're a seasoned family historian, a tech-savvy hobbyist, or someone who simply enjoys being part of a collaborative, mission-driven community, there's a place for you on our volunteer team. Here are just a few ways you can get involved:

Content Creators & Writers

Do you have a knack for storytelling? We're looking for volunteers to write short features and articles for our **quarterly journal** and **monthly newsletter**. Share research discoveries, profile interesting ancestors, or help highlight underrepresented histories in our state.

Transcribers & Document Photographers

Our archives are filled with historical records that need to be transcribed and digitized for future access. If you enjoy deciphering old handwriting (reading cursive and/or interpreting letters based on other words in the document) or have a steady hand with a camera or a scanner, this role is perfect for you.

Whether you have an hour a week or a few hours a month, your time and talents can make a lasting impact. Volunteering with us is not only rewarding—it's also a great way to connect with fellow researchers, deepen your own genealogical skills, and contribute to preserving the rich and diverse history of our state.

Ready to join us? Please complete the [Arkansas Genealogical Society Volunteer Signup](#), and let us know what areas you're most interested in. Training and guidance are always provided. Let's build something meaningful together.

Website Support

We're building a stronger, more dynamic online presence. If you have experience with WordPress or website upkeep, we would love your help keeping our website updated and user-friendly.

Project Management & Coordination

Some of our most exciting initiatives need behind-the-scenes support. If you're organized, love planning, or have a background in project coordination, we welcome your skills to help us manage timelines and team efforts.

Membership Recruitment & Outreach

Help us grow our community! If you enjoy connecting with others and spreading the word about our work, you can play a key role in helping us welcome new members and build partnerships across the state.

Register Today!

Arkansas Genealogical Society Annual Fall Conference

*Saturday, October 18, 2025
9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
Virtual*

*Featuring: “Fall into Family History,” a lecture by renowned
genealogist, author, and educator, Thomas MacEntee*



Thomas MacEntee, known as “That Genealogy Guy,” is a respected figure in the genealogy community, recognized for his expertise as an author, educator, student, advocate, marketer, storyteller, and entrepreneur. He is dedicated to empowering individuals in their pursuit of family history. Mr. MacEntee will guide you in achieving your family history goals through engaging and informative sessions.

Conference Schedule:

- 8:30 a.m.** Webinar Opens—Welcome Screen and Technical Check
- 9:00 a.m.** Webinar Commencement
- 9:15 a.m.** Session 1: “You Use What for Genealogy?”
- 10:15 a.m.** Break
- 10:30 a.m.** Session 2: “Internet Archive: A Gold Mine for Genealogists”
- 11:30 a.m.** Lunch Break
- 12:30 p.m.** Session 3: “Translating, Transcribing, and Summarizing Documents Using AI”
- 1:30 p.m.** Break
- 1:45 p.m.** Session 4: “Creating an Ancestor Sketch”
- 2:45 p.m.** Break—Instructions for Annual Meeting
- 3:00 p.m.** Annual Meeting (Members Only)

Arkansas Genealogical Society Annual Fall Conference

Saturday, October 18, 2025, 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Conference Memorials

Honor the memory of a loved one by contributing to the Arkansas Genealogical Society's mission of preserving and sharing family history. **With a minimum donation of \$25**, you can create a memorial tribute that will be displayed on our website, during the opening, closing, and breaks of our [Fall Conference](#), and included in the conference handout.

Additionally, your tribute will be featured in [The Arkansas Family Historian](#) quarterly following the conference. Your generous support helps fund our programs and resources, ensuring that the stories of past generations continue to be told. If you wish to contribute more, additional donations are gratefully accepted. Thank you for helping us serve the genealogical community.

Submit your memorial here: argensoc.org/memorial

Conference Sponsorship

Support the [AGS Fall Conference](#) by becoming a sponsor! As a sponsor, your company will be recognized on:

- The AGS website
- During the conference (opening, closing, and breaks)
- Conference handouts
- [The Arkansas Family Historian](#) quarterly following the conference

We offer three levels of sponsorship:

- Bronze (\$25)—list the sponsor's name
- Silver (\$50)—list the sponsor's name, plus a short paragraph
- Gold (\$100)—list the sponsor's name, a short paragraph, and logo

Once payment is received, we will reach out to you for the details of your listing. If you prefer, your sponsorship can remain anonymous.

Submit Your Sponsorship Request Here: argensoc.org/sponsorship

Stay Up-to-Date with Us!

*Follow us on social media and
bookmark our website!*



[Facebook.com/ARGenealogy](https://www.facebook.com/ARGenealogy)



[LinkedIn.com/company/Arkansas-
Genealogical-Society-inc](https://www.linkedin.com/company/Arkansas-Genealogical-Society-inc)



[ArGenSoc.org](https://www.ArGenSoc.org)

So, You Have Arkansas Roots?

*The Fall edition of our quarterly publication, **The Arkansas Family Historian** is about to be released! This resource is **only** available to our members and is invaluable in Arkansas genealogical and family research.*

If you're interested in this and many more benefits, consider becoming a member today! Sign up at argensoc.org/join-us!

AGS Ezine Administrative Staff

Contributions: If you have news for The AGS Ezine, send it to ezine@argensoc.org.

AGS: To learn more about the Arkansas Genealogical Society, visit our website at www.argensoc.org

Subscribe: If you have friends and relatives who would like to receive The AGS Ezine, direct them to the sign-up link on our website. Membership is not required to receive The AGS Ezine, but we heartily encourage you to join our wonderful organization! Membership details are on our website.

Comments: If you have suggestions of comments about The AGS Ezine, contact ezine@argensoc.org.

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