

The Transfer of Scottish Placenames to Canada

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Scottish migration to the area of present-day Canada was so intensive from the late 1700s to the early 1900s that nearly two million Canadians claimed Scottish ancestry after the middle of the twentieth century. Through their placenames the Scots were able to reinforce their presence in Canada. Settlements in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island were mainly developed by migrants from the Highlands and Western Isles in the late 1700s and early 1800s, so that most of their names recall places in those parts of Scotland. In the remaining provinces and territories (except Newfoundland, which had no direct migration from Scotland), most of the transfer names came from the Lowland parts of Scotland, principally during the 1800s. From Inverness in Nova Scotia's Cape Breton Island and Strathgartney in Prince Edward Island to Lanark in Ontario, and Thurso in Quebec to Banff in Alberta, and Clyde River in Nunavut, Canada reveals an extensive Scottish contribution to its rich toponymy.

A favored source of placenames in British colonial America was the names of the hometowns in the British Isles from which the administrators and immigrants came. This was in contrast with the naming practices in colonies established by Romance countries in the Western Hemisphere, where the names of the saints and national heroes inspired the giving of names. From the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth century the provinces of British North America, and subsequently the larger territory of Canada, the giving of distinctive British, specially English, names to towns, cities, counties and townships effectively reinforced a toponymic layer that clearly reflected the fact that one was living in a land ruled by the British monarch and administered by British parliamentary regulations and laws. Scottish, Irish, and Welsh names were given in British territory, but considerably less than English names. But, nevertheless, Scottish names were frequently transplanted in the toponymy of Canada, especially in the provinces of Ontario, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. This article deals specifically with the transfer of placenames either directly from Scotland, or indirectly from Scotland through one province to another, and also includes the names Caledon, Caledonia, Scotia, Scotland, Alba, and, as well, Bon Accord, the motto of Aberdeen. Scottish placenames embedded in titles (e.g., Elgin, Dalhousie, Selkirk) are excluded, as are personal names (e.g., Fraser, Burns, Macdonald) and ethnic terms (e.g., Scotch Corners, Scotstown, Scots Bay).

The Scottish connection to present-day Canada began as early as 1621 when Sir William Alexander, a Scottish gentleman serving at the English

court was granted the right to develop a *New Scotland* in the New World. Although colonists were sent out to Cape Breton Island and the Annapolis Valley during the following decade, all that subsequently remained of the efforts of the Company of Scottish Adventurers was the Latin title of the colony, Nova Scotia, and a north-south boundary separating it from New England. It was only after France surrendered its lands in the St. Lawrence Valley in 1763 that any concerted efforts were made to encourage emigration from the British Isles to the lands north of what became the United States of America.

The migration of Scots was quite intensive from the late 1700s to the early 1900s, especially during the first half of the nineteenth century. The early immigrants were mainly from the Highlands and the Western Isles, and they settled primarily in Cape Breton Island, on the northern shore of mainland Nova Scotia, in Prince Edward Island, and in Glengarry County of what was then called Upper Canada. Later immigrants from both the Highlands and the Lowlands¹ settled mainly in Eastern and Southwestern Ontario, in the Eastern Townships of Quebec, in New Brunswick, and in the three Prairie Provinces.

By the middle of the twentieth century nearly two million Canadians claimed Scottish ancestry, while the total population of Scotland at that time was only slightly more than five million (Kirkconnell 1970). The distribution of Scottish Canadians from coast to coast by the 1970s revealed that 45% were in Ontario, 20% in the Prairie Provinces, 15% in British Columbia, 13% in the Atlantic Provinces, and less than 1% in the northern territories (Andrews 1981). From the perspective of the percentage of provincial/territorial populations in the 1970s, Prince Edward Island led the way, with almost 22% of its population claiming Scottish roots. Following in order were: Nova Scotia, 18%; British Columbia, 12%; Yukon, 11%; Alberta, 10%; Manitoba 10%; Ontario, 10%; New Brunswick, 9%; Saskatchewan, 9%; Northwest Territories/Nunavut,² 6%; and each of Newfoundland and Quebec, less than 2%. (Andrews 1981).

Achieving precision in determining the number of Scottish placenames affixed to Canadian populated places, administrative divisions, and physical and cultural features would be a herculean task. Even then, it would be almost impossible to distinguish actual transferred placenames from those placenames within the titles of royalty and nobility given to Canadian features. The following numbers, therefore, should be viewed as the general picture of the distribution of Scottish placenames transferred to Canada, and remaining as official names: Newfoundland, 0; Nova Scotia, 130; Prince Edward Island, 59; New Brunswick, 49; Quebec, 7; Ontario, 108, Manitoba, 20, Saskatchewan, 35, Alberta, 54; British Columbia, 16, Yukon, 1, Nunavut, 18; Northwest Territories, 0.



Newfoundland. During the early history of Newfoundland, settlement was not only discouraged but was by and large prevented by British authorities. Thus the emigrant ships bound for North America bypassed the largely hostile coasts of Newfoundland. The only identifiable Scottish migration to the province took place in the 1840s, when some Scots moved from Cape Breton Island to the then unsettled Codroy Valley of southwestern Newfoundland. The name St. Andrews in that valley clearly has Scottish roots, but it reflects the patron saint of Scotland, and not the placename in Fifeshire. Otherwise there are no Scottish placenames in the most eastern of Canada's provinces.

Nova Scotia. In the early part of the nineteenth century Scots comprised the largest ethnic group in this province. By 1871 one third of the population claimed Scottish roots, with some counties having more than 50% of its citizens with Scottish ancestry (Fraser, 1986). Almost half the 130 Scottish placenames reflected in the province are located in Cape Breton Island, with the North Shore counties of Cumberland, Colchester, Pictou, Antigonish, and Guysborough accounting for most of the remaining transfer names in the province. Four times as many Highland/Western Isles names transferred to Nova Scotia compared to Lowland names.

The Scottish settlement of Cape Breton Islands took its roots from Scotland's Western Highlands and the Inner and Outer Hebrides (Hornsby 1988). In the first forty years of the nineteenth century some 20,000 Highland Scots settled in Cape Breton Island. By 1871, two-thirds of the

island's population of 75,000 was of Scottish origin (Hornsby 1992). Incredibly, hardly any Scottish placenames appeared on maps of the island during the first eighty years of the nineteenth century, but this can be explained in part to the poor surveys of land, the use of Gaelic as the home language among the Scots, and thinly strung out settlements not requiring identification (Davey 1988). With the publication of Ambrose Church's county maps of Cape Breton Island between 1877 and 1887 and the opening of numerous post offices throughout the settlements, the naming of places and physical features after Scottish places increased dramatically. Almost all of the Scottish transfer names in Cape Breton Island are from the Highlands and the Western Isles. No fewer than 30 names in Inverness County, among them the county and the town of Inverness, and the communities of Creignish, Kinloch, Keppoch, Dunvegan, Skye Glen, Mull River, Fassifern, Glengarry and Glencoe recall places and geographical features in the Western Highlands and the Inner Hebrides. Among Cape Breton County's 13 Scottish transfer names include Boisdale, Rear Boisdale, Ben Eoin, and Glengarry Valley from the Scottish Highlands and the Outer Hebrides, and New Aberdeen and Glasgow from the Lowlands. The 10 transfer names in Victoria County include Barra Glen, Gairloch Mountain, Iona, New Harris, and Skir Dhu, and among the eight names in the smallest county, Richmond, are Balmoral, Barra Head, Loch Lomond, and Oban.

In 1773, 180 Scottish Highlanders arrived in Pictou Harbour to begin the settlement of the counties of Nova Scotia's North Shore. At least 11 placenames reflect the Highland influence in Pictou County, among them being Glengarry, Glenshee, Knoydart, Laggan, Loch Broom, Moydart, and New Gairloch. The main urban center of the county, New Glasgow, was founded in the 1780s by surveyor William Fraser, who perceived the East River of Pictou as the River Clyde. Antigonish County, to the east of Pictou, reveals 20 placenames from the Highlands, among them being Arisaig, Glassburn, Lochaber, Head of Lochaber, Loch Katrine, Morar, and Morvan. There are 11 transfer names in Guysborough County, most with connections to the Highlands, including Glencoe, Glenelg, South Lochaber, and Waternish. Colchester County, to the west of Pictou, has 11 transfer names, including Balmoral Mills, New Annan, Glenbervie, and Montrose. The three transfer names in Cumberland County are Athol, South Athol, and Glasgow Mountain.

Halifax County has five transfer names: Glenmore, Lochaber Mines, Seaforth, Tantallon, and Upper Tantallon. Shelburne County has Port Clyde and Clyde River and the Argyle District of Yarmouth County has numerous derivatives of Argyle (from Scotland's Argyll), including Argyle Sound, Central Argyle, and Lower Argyle.

Prince Edward Island. In 1771 and 1772 Captain John MacDonald of Glenaladale in Inverness-shire resettled Scots of Boisdale on South Uist and 300 of his own people from his estate, landing them at the

appropriately named Scotchfort in Lots 35 and 36, in what was then called St. John's Island. The name Glenaladale was subsequently given to a school district, but it was supplanted as the name of the settlement by Blooming Point. Scottish names remaining in those lots include Corran Ban, Dunstaffnage, Glenroy, Glenfinnan, and Fort Augustus.

In 1803, Thomas Douglas, the 5th Earl of Selkirk, arranged for some 800 Scots, mostly from the Isle of Skye, but many from the Outer Hebrides and the Highlands, to settle on his lands in southeastern Prince Edward Island. Names that were ultimately given in that area include Iona, Uigg, Glencoe, Kinross, Lewes, and Culloden.

By the early 1850s almost half the population of the province was of Scottish origin, and were dominant on the southeastern part of the island, and northwest of Charlottetown as far as Malpeque Bay (Clark 1959). Such dominance is reflected in the following names: Annandale, Appin Road, Argyle Shore, Bonshaw, Breadalbane, Cardross, Clyde River, Dunblane, Dundee, Dunedin, Ellerslie, Glencorradale, Glengarry, Inverness, Kelvin Grove, Keppoch, Kilmuir, Kinlock, Kinross, Lyndale, Montrose, New Annan, New Glasgow, New Haven, New Perth, Rock Barra, Roseneath, Stanchel, Strathgartney, and Summerfield (Rayburn 1973).

New Brunswick. In 1833, the New Brunswick and Nova Scotia Company purchased a large area in southern New Brunswick, and settled Scots from Glenelg, Glengarry and the Isle of Skye on the lands. However, the settlements failed because the needs of the settlers were largely ignored on their arrival, and no Scottish placenames from that period remain in the area.

Two-thirds of the province's transfer names from Scotland are from the Lowlands. Most of the Scottish names in the province were given by individuals, such as Adam Allen, who proposed Dumfries in 1833 for a parish (a land division) west of Fredericton, and Christopher Scott, who had named Greenock Church in St. Andrews, with this providing the source of the name of the community of Greenock, 17 miles north of that town. Several names in the area of Campbellton, in the north of the province, were derived from Scottish places, including Atholville, Balmoral, Balmoral Parish, Blair Athol, Dundee, Glencoe, Inch Arran Point, and Glenlivet (a postal name until 1967, although the local residents preferred the current approved name Glenlevit). Perth Parish in the northern St. John River valley was named after the birthplace of Lieutenant-Governor Archibald Campbell, and the nearby communities of Bon Accord, Kincardine, Kintore, and Lerwick acquired their names from Scottish sources. The former village of Perth on the east bank of the river was united in 1966 with the village of Andover on the west bank to form the village of Perth-Andover. Other placenames in the province taken from Scottish places include Loch Alva, Argyle, Breadalbane, Canobie,

River Dee, River Don, Kilmarnock, Loch Lomond, Melrose, Stonehaven, Tay River, Tay Creek, Taymouth, and Torryburn (Rayburn 1975).

Quebec. In 1807, Argenteuil and Papineau counties on the north side of the Ottawa River were settled by Scots. The town of Thurso was named in honor of those early pioneers after Thurso in Scotland's Caithness. Lochaber Township, established that year in the same area, likely has no particular relevance to that Scottish settlement. New Glasgow, north of Montréal, was founded in about 1820 by Scottish settlers. In 1833, the British-American Company acquired 850,000 acres in the Eastern Townships, and settled many Highlanders and Western Islanders there. Six Scottish names, Inverness (village, township), Lingwick, Sainte-Marguerite-de-Lingwick (hamlet, parish) and Stornoway, remain in the townships northeast of Sherbrooke as reminders of those settlements. The Chateauguay Valley southwest of Montréal was settled by Lowland Scots, mostly from Fifeshire, and the village of Dundee on the New York border is the only toponymic evidence of that settlement.

Ontario. Scottish transfer placenames are confined to Southern Ontario, that part of the province south of Lake Nipissing. In 1791, surveyor Augustus Jones laid out the townships of Dublin, Glasgow, and Edinburgh on the north shore of Lake Ontario. Not finding these names "British" enough to persuade Loyalists to the British crown to settle in Upper Canada, Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe had them renamed York, Scarborough, and Pickering the following year.

Glengarry County was established in 1791 as one of Upper Canada's 19 counties, and was settled in 1802 by Bishop Alexander McDonell with disbanded soldiers of the Glengarry Regiment. By 1806 there were more than 10,000 Scottish Highlanders in Glengarry and adjoining counties in both Upper and Lower Canada (Hill 1972).

After establishing a Scottish settlement in southeastern Prince Edward Island, Lord Selkirk turned to Upper Canada in 1803, and applied for the townships of Dover and Chatham on Lake St. Clair to resettle Scottish Highlanders. But his Baldoon settlement failed due to floods, crop losses, and poor management (Hill 1972). He also received a grant in Haldimand County on Lake Erie, but he did not bring out any settlers. In 1855 a post office there was called Selkirk.

In 1815, the Colonial office aided the migration of some 700, mostly Scots, from Glasgow, Renfrewshire, and Perthshire to the Rideau Settlement, some 40 miles southwest of present-day Ottawa. Two years later it coordinated another scheme whereby another 300 Scots were helped to migrate to Upper Canada. Further schemes were supported by the British government in the 1820s, largely to reduce the costs of relieving the poverty of large areas of Britain. Other Scottish settlers came out in the following decade to open up the lands on the Clyde River in present-day Lanark County.

In contrast with the Highland/Western Isles source of most of the Scottish transfer names in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, almost three times as many Scottish names (74) from the Lowland counties were transplanted to Ontario than Highland names (27). Glengarry County has one township, Lochiel, named after a castle in Inverness-shire, and among its other names from the Highlands are Dunvegan, Glenroy and Loch Garry. Other Highland/Western Isles names distributed across the province include Arnprior, Callander, Duntroon, Glencoe, Iona, Tobermory, Arran Township, Roseneath, Aberfoyle, Dornoch, Embro, Dunrobin, and Glenelg Township.

In 1816, the town of Perth and Tay River were among the earliest Lowland names planted in the province, followed by New Lanark at what became the village of Lanark in Lanark Township and Lanark County. The village is now part of the municipal township of Lanark Highlands on the Clyde River. The town of Carleton Place recalls a street called Carlton Place in central Glasgow, but pleads to postal authorities in the mid-1900s to spell the name right fell on deaf ears. Lanark influenced the choice of Renfrew for the name of an adjoining county, and within that county are four Lowland names: Glasgow Station, Braeside, Hyndford, and Douglas.

Bruce County, on Lake Huron, has four townships with names taken from the Lowlands: Kincardine, Carrick, Turnberry, and Elderslie. Kincardine is also a town and nearby Paisley is named for a suburb of Glasgow. Dumfries Township was founded on the Grand River by William Dickson in 1816, and in 1850 the municipal townships of North Dumfries and South Dumfries were organized. Nith River, a tributary of the Grand, takes its name from the River Nith in Dumfriesshire, and the communities of Ayr and Nithburg are located on its banks. Other Lowland names distributed across the southern part of the province include: Ailsa Craig, Doon, Fenwick, Annan, Kinmount, Bothwell, Innerkip, Park Head, Bannockburn, Stirling, Belwood, Dalkeith, Craigeleith, Merlin, Brechin, New Dundee, Parkhill, and Novar.

Manitoba. Sixteen of the 20 transfer names in this province are from the Lowlands of Scotland. In 1811 the Earl of Selkirk acquired land grants of some 110,000 square miles (four times larger than Scotland) in the Hudson's Bay Company's lands of the Northwest, in what became known as the Red River Settlement. Selkirk, now a town downriver from Winnipeg, was founded by Lord Selkirk in 1812. A year later he encouraged 100 settlers from Sutherland, mostly from Kildonan, to immigrate to the settlement, and he named Kildonan on the north side of present-day Winnipeg in honor of the pioneer settlers (Hill 1972). Between 1914 and 1924, Kildonan was divided among the municipalities of Old Kildonan, East Kildonan, West Kildonan, and North Kildonan, but all four were absorbed into the urban neighborhoods of Winnipeg in 1970. Among other Scottish names transferred to the province were Balmoral,

Binscarth, Carberry, Dunnottar, Glencairn, Katrime, Kemnay, Loch Monar, and Reston.

Saskatchewan. Barry (1997) estimated that about 150 names had been transferred from Scotland to Saskatchewan, but he included the names of schools, names superseded by other names, or disappeared entirely; he may have also included placenames embedded in titles. Three-quarters of the 35 Scottish transfer names remaining in use in the province are derived from the Lowland counties; they were primarily given by pioneer settlers in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth. Among the Lowland names are Abernethy, Balgonie, Cupar, Dalmeny, Inchkeith, Invermay, Ituna, Jedburgh, Kelso, Loch Leven, Orkney, Peebles, Saltcoats, Stranraer, and Tantallon. The names from the Highlands include Arran (transferred via Arran Township, Ontario), Cardross, Colonsay, Lomond, Melfort, Stornoway, and Trossachs.

Alberta. Mirroring Saskatchewan, three-quarters of the Scottish transfer names in Alberta are from the Lowlands of Scotland, with only 13 of the 54 names coming from the Highlands/Western Isles. In the Rocky Mountains, on Alberta's side of the continental divide, only three names reflect Scottish Highland sources: Mount Barra, Cairngorm, and Mount Stornoway (which came from Lewis in the Outer Hebrides via the Official Opposition Leader's residence in Ottawa). Among the Lowland names in the Rockies are Banff and Banff National Park (deemed Lowland because the individuals connected to their naming were from the Lowland part of Banffshire), Cheviot Mountain, Mount Cumnock, Mount Greenoch, Mount Inglismaldie, Luscar, Luscar Creek, and Luscar Mountain. In Southern Alberta there are only nine Scottish transfer names, with three being from the Highlands/Western Isles: Calgary, Inversnay, and Lomond. The Lowland names in Southern Alberta include Airdrie, Carstairs, Kirkaldy, and Kininvie. In Central Alberta there are only five Highlands/Western Isles names: Nevis, Glenevis (via Glennevis, Cape Breton Island), Islay, Campsie, and Strome, but 24 Lowland names, among them being Ardrossan, Barrhead, Bon Accord, Craigmillar, Dirleton, Ellerslie, Ferintosh, Halkirk, Kilsyth, Lochinvar, Rosyth, Scapa, and Stewartfield. Northern Alberta (north of Whitecourt and Barrhead) has only six transfer names, four from the Highlands/Western Isles: Dunvegan, Dunvegan Creek, Inverness River, Pitlochrie; and two from the Lowlands: Ballater and Eaglesham.

British Columbia. In many ways this province is quite distinct culturally and physically from the rest of Canada, and this is certainly true for its toponymic profile. The transfer of names from homelands in Europe is far down the scale after descriptive naming, personal naming, honorific naming, and adaptation of native naming. Although explorer Simon Fraser perceived his mother's description of New Caledonia when he crossed the Rocky Mountains, and this name thereafter identified a Hudson's Bay Company district, the actual transfer of Scotland's

placenames to this province has been minimal. The driving of the last spike of the transcontinental Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885 by Donald Smith (later Lord Strathcona) resulted in the giving of the name of Craigellachie, taken from the rallying cry of the Grants, "Stand fast Craigellachie," in reference to a place on the border of Morayshire and Banffshire. Nearby Clachnacudainn Range, Inverness Peaks and Inverness Glacier were named after the royal burgh of Inverness and a famous rock in it. The Canadian Pacific siding of Leancoil in the Kicking Horse River valley was named after the birthplace of Lord Strathcona's mother. Inverness Passage at the mouth of the Skeena River, and near the city of Prince Rupert, was named in 1880. Other Scottish placenames transferred to the province include Drynoch, Dundarave, Edinburgh Mountain, Lake Errock, Fintry, Iona Island, Kerrisdale, Montrose, and Sandwick.

Yukon. The only name reflecting Scotland's names in the Yukon Territory is Caledonia Creek, given in 1913 by gold miners David Edwards and Burnett Middleton.

Northwest Territories. In what remains of the territory after the separation of Nunavut from the Northwest Territories on April 1, 1999, there does not appear to be any evidence of Scottish transfer placenames.

Nunavut. In exploring for the fabled Northwest Passage from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century, hundreds of explorers gave thousands of names to geographical features in the Canadian Arctic. Honoring royalty, nobility, government officials and bureaucrats, financial supporters, and others promoting exploration and discovery all took precedence over the honoring of family, personal friends and places back home. Among the many explorers, only John Ross and Dr. John Rae appear to have chosen to recall hometowns and other geographical features in Scotland. In 1818, John Ross named Cape Eglinton on the east side of Baffin Island after the 12th Earl of Eglinton, thus giving an honorific name. Subsequently the naming of nearby Ayr Pass, and thereafter Ayr Lake, may have been done because Lord Eglinton had been a long time Member of Parliament for Ayr. Ross also named Cape Cargenholm in the same area for a place in Kirkcudbrightshire. Later, in 1829, Ross named Athol Island near Boothia Peninsula in the central Arctic after Blair Atholl in Perthshire. In the 1840s, Dr. Rae explored the same area of the central Arctic and named Edinburgh Island and Edinburgh Channel south of Victoria Island in honor of the University of Edinburgh, where he had studied medicine. He also named Orkney Point on Edinburgh Island in honor of his birthplace. In 1931, J.D. Soper proposed Glasgow Inlet, Glasgow Bay, and Glasgow Island on the south side of Baffin Island, noting that the inlet's name was used by whites that he had met there. In 1950, P.D. Baird named Clyde Fiord and Clyde River on the east side of Baffin Island. Subsequently an Inuit community by the name of Clyde River developed at the mouth of the river.

Memories of former home towns were kept alive with the transmission of Old Country names across the Atlantic. Through their placenames the Scots were able to reinforce their presence in Canada, especially in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and in Ontario's counties of Glengarry and Bruce.

From New Aberdeen and Inverness on Nova Scotia's Cape Breton Island to Lanark and Paisley in Ontario, and from New Glasgow and Thurso in Quebec to Banff in Alberta and Dundarave in British Columbia, Canada reveals an extensive Scottish contribution to its rich toponymy.

Notes

1. Scotland has had new regions since the 1970s, but their names (e.g., Dumfries and Galloway, Scottish Borders) are little known in North America. It has been decided to maintain the traditional county names in this article, primarily because they were the names in use when the great majority of Scots migrated to North America. The Scottish Lowlands comprise all the former counties south of a line from Glasgow to Dundee, and include Caithness, the Orkney and Shetland islands, and a broad eastern strip with a width of some 15 to 35 miles of the counties of Dumbarton, Stirling, Perth, Angus, Kincardine, Aberdeen, Banff, Moray, Nairn, Ross and Cromarty, and Sutherland. The Highlands include Argyll and Bute, and the remainder of the mainland counties. The Western Isles are made up of the Inner Hebrides from Islay in the south to Skye in the north, and the Outer Hebrides from Barra in the south to Lewis and Harris in the north.
2. On April 1, 1999 the new territory of Nunavut was severed from the Northwest Territories. Embracing 770,000 square miles, the new territory comprises most of the Arctic islands and a large part of the mainland west of Hudson Bay. It provides for a homeland for most of Canada's Inuit, who make up 85% of its population. The remainder of the Northwest Territories, comprising the Mackenzie River valley, the areas of Great Bear and Great Slave Lakes, and the city of Yellowknife, has an area of 502,000 square miles. Northwest Territories, a misnomer since 1905, when it became a single administrative territory, will continue to be the name of the territory between Nunavut and Yukon, while its government and residents, during the next five years, review proposals for a suitable name, or multiple names to suit each of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in the territory.

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