

# SUMMER 2024

**Issue No. 1**

## What's inside:

<b>Our project .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Project Updates .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Generous Supporters .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Upcoming Events .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Meet the Members .....</b>	<b>13</b>



**1847**

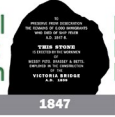
**Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation**

**1195 Sherbrooke O. Montréal, QC H3A 1H9**

[montrealirishmonument.com](http://montrealirishmonument.com)







# Our Project



(Left to right) Scott Phelan, treasurer (MIMPF), Martin Perron, (archaeologist at Hydro-Québec), and Fergus Keyes, president (MIMPF)

## MONTREAL IRISH MONUMENT PARK

### Notes from the President

Our project is to build a world-class memorial park and cultural green space at the Montreal side of Victoria Bridge, around the Black Rock.

**The Black Rock** was installed in 1859 by the builders of the bridge. It honors the approximately 6,000 Irish immigrants that died of typhus, also known as ship's fever.

Many people do not realize that when they commute over the Victoria Bridge that **they are actually driving over a massive graveyard**. We feel that more should be done to honor the site and the those who call it their final resting place. We hope to involve all levels of Government, as well as Corporate, and individual donors, to build a commemorative space on the site.

### Did you know?

The Black Rock Monument is the **oldest monument** to the Great Hunger (Irish famine) in the world.

The Rock protects and marks **largest famine grave of Irish citizens** outside of Ireland

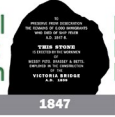
The Rock sits over the **largest mass grave in Canada**.











# Project Updates

## BLACK ROCK LAND DONATED TO THE FOUNDATION BY THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE

Bishop Mary Irwin-Gibson, bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Montreal, announces the **official transfer of the property title of the land housing the historic monument of the Black Rock** to the Irish Monument Park Foundation of Montreal.

On October 18, 2023 The Anglican Church officially donated the plot of land on which the Black Rock monument rests to the Irish Monument Park Foundation of Montreal. The Anglican Church has owned this plot of land, approximately 734 square meters in size, since 1870. This property is a key element in the creation of a commemorative park in honor of those buried at this historic site, which is located atop the largest mass grave in Canada.

Bishop Mary Irwin-Gibson of the Anglican Diocese of Montreal and Fergus Keyes, President of the Irish Monument Park Foundation of Montreal, stated:

"We are deeply grateful to Bishop Irwin-Gibson and the Anglican Diocese for this generous donation," said Fergus Keyes, president of the Irish Monument Park Foundation of Montreal. "This gesture represents an important step in the process of creating an appropriate facility – memorial space around the Black Rock that will reflect the historical significance of the site, not only for Montreal's Irish community but for the entire city."



(Left to right) Mary Irwin-Gibson, bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Montreal, Fergus Keyes, President of the Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation.

Read more on the news:

[Global News - Black Rock land 'crucial' for memorial park, transferred to Irish community](#)

[CBC - Montreal one step closer to commemorating Irish mass grave site with park](#)

[Irish Central - Montreal Great Hunger monument land officially transferred to Irish foundation ownership](#)



## AWARD-WINNING FIRM LEMAY CHOSEN FOR THE ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN CONTRACT FOR THE IRISH MONUMENT PARK



Over the last few months, members of the foundation's Construction Committee met with potential architecture and design firms. These firms were referred by our partners at the City of Montreal and Hydro Quebec.

Upon careful deliberation the foundation accepted Lemay's offer of service. Their passion for the project, impeccable portfolio, and willingness to go above and beyond contributed to the selection.

The foundation is confident that this award-winning firm will help create the perfect commemorative space for our ancestors and our community.

Visit Lemay's website to learn more about them. <https://lemay.com/>

Photo: From left to right, bottom to top: Fergus Keyes (President MIMPF), Marie-Claude Durand (Manager - Regional Affairs and Community Relations at Hydro-Québec), Bruno Picard (Chair of the Construction Committee and liaison at Hydro-Québec), Scott Phelan (Treasurer MIMPF), Vivian Doyle-Kelley (Director, MIMPF), Johanne Savard (Advisor - Communication and Communities), Kelley-Ann O'Rourke (Director MIMPF), Patricia Lussier (Partner Senior, Landscape Architect at Lemay), Stéphanie Fortin (Planning Consultant - City of Montréal), Marie-Eve Parent (Partner Senior, Landscape Architect at Lemay), Esmé Cavanaugh (Administrative assistant MIMPF), Karim Charef (Division Manager, Urban Planning and Mobility Department, Ville de Montréal)

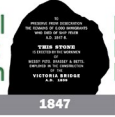
## \$1 MILLION FUNDRAISING GOAL FOR THE FIRST YEAR ACHIEVED!

The foundation reached its fundraising goal of \$1 Million in donations and pledges for the end of 2023. The funding has come from our amazing partners from the Quebec Government (Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise), the Irish Government (Emigrant Support Program), and most importantly, from our own community through organizations such as the St Patrick's Society and the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society! Read further to learn more about their incredible support.



Sterling Downey (Montreal City Councillor); Kevin Tracey (President UIS); Fergus Keyes (MIMPF) & Scott Phelan (MIMPF)





# GLOBAL IRISH FAMINE WAY

## Connecting the dots of the Irish diaspora

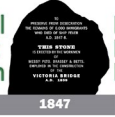
The Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation is thrilled to announce our participation in extending the Global Irish Famine Way to Canada! This meaningful project commemorates the journey of Irish emigrants during the Great Famine, with bronze shoes installed at significant historic sites along the Famine Trail, spanning from Ireland to Canada, the US, and Australia.

As part of this initiative, commemorative Bronze Shoes will be placed at various sites across the Atlantic. While the Bronze Shoes are currently en route from Galway and will soon arrive in St. John's, NL, where our foundation Secretary, Lynn Doyle will be there amongst other recipients from across Canada to welcome them. We're excited to symbolically receive them this year until a permanent place is ready once the memorial park is finished.

In Quebec, several cemeteries, including Grosse Ile, the Black Rock, Sillery, and Saint-Colomban, are part of the Famine Way Project. Each site holds profound historical significance, serving as a poignant reminder of the hardships endured by famine refugees. Let's join together to honor their legacy, more details coming soon! <https://nationalfamineway.ie/>



From left to right: Lynn Doyle (Director MIMPF), Eamonn McKee (Ambassador of Ireland to Canada) holding Bronze Shoes



## WE'VE MOVED INTO OUR NEW DOWNTOWN OFFICE AT THE HISTORIC FORGET HOUSE

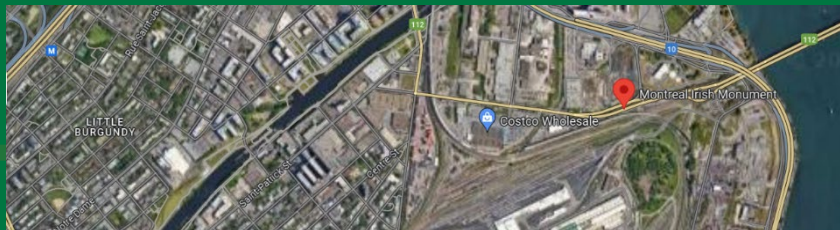
Run by the Macdonald Stewart Foundation, the Forget House is a historic building in Montreal's Golden Square Mile. Built in 1884, today it houses the offices of several non-profits aside from the Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation, including the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society and the St. Andrew's Society.

The Forget house is a testament to heritage preservation and community responsibility.

**Please note our new address: 1195 Sherbrooke O, Montreal, Quebec H3A 1H9**

## OFFICIAL LAND TRANSFER SET FOR AUTUMN 2024

Upon the completion of their new substation "Des Irlandais", our partner Hydro-Québec is set to officially donate roughly 15 000m<sup>2</sup> of land to the foundation to build Black Rock the commemorative site. With this final transfer of land, a very considerate gesture from the company, members of the Montreal Irish community will, for the first time, own a significant portion of the 1847 cemetery under and around the Black Rock. Keep an eye out for our fundraising dinner to celebrate this historic moment and raise funds in September 2024. Visit our website for more information.



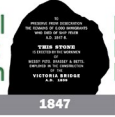
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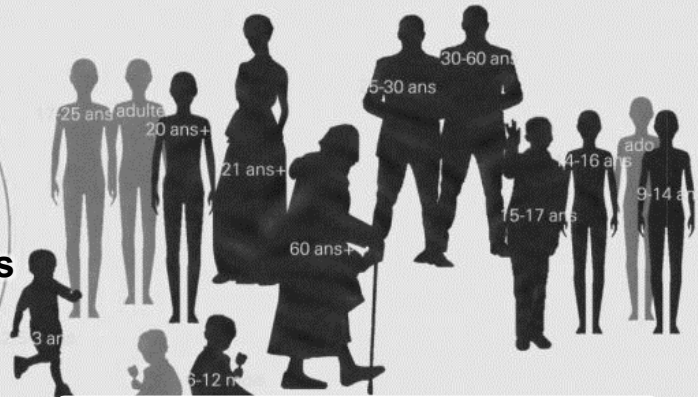






# WHO ARE THEY?

The remains of 14 individuals  
excavated by REM archaeologists



In November 2019, a team of archaeologists embarked on an excavation at the Black Rock cemetery site. Their mission was prompted by the need to install a REM (Réseau express métropolitain) pillar, which was suspected to intersect with the cemetery grounds. Demonstrating a commitment to responsible development, the company collaborated with the Irish Montreal community to finance the dig and ensure respectful handling of any human remains discovered.

**This endeavor marked the first official archaeological effort at the site.** Lead archaeologist Martin Perron emphasized the historical significance, noting that prior to this excavation, the only analyzed human remains of Irish migrants in Quebec were those of eighteen individuals found at Cap-des-Rosiers, identified as castaways from the Carricks shipwreck.

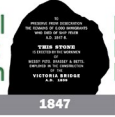
The inscription on the Black Rock Monument estimates that 6000 Irish refugees were buried in the cemetery, yet the identities and stories of those interred remained largely veiled in mystery until now.

Through the excavation of a cylindrical hole measuring 7m<sup>2</sup>, the team unearthed the remains of 14 individuals laid to rest in white pine coffins. Among them were seven adults, including two men and two women, three teenagers, and four children.

For further insights into these individuals, including details about childhood diet and prevalent ailments, readers are encouraged to explore our website. Particularly poignant are the stories of a 12-24 month old infant and a young boy with a disability in his right leg. It's poignant to reflect on the arduous journeys these individuals endured—from their homes to the coffin ships, mostly on foot, surviving months of hardship aboard overcrowded and disease-ridden vessels, only to succumb to illness on foreign shores.

Yet, it is in honoring the memory of these refugees that the foundation endeavors to ensure this site, their final resting place, receives the dignified commemoration it deserves.





# LAB TESTING REMAINS

## Stay tuned for DNA testing information on remains

The remains excavated by REM archaeologists were subsequently sent to a laboratory for testing purposes. We did receive a note from them the remains were fairly well preserved and that DNA can likely be obtained for all or most of these remains. The hope is that the DNA will provide information such as the gender of the victim; the approximate age; the cause of death (likely typhus or malnutrition or a combination); the diet of the victims over time (likely potatoes, corn etc.); confirmation that these remains were Irish and from the 1847 event (almost for sure but still testing is required) and similar information that will help to build a profile of each victim.

Advances in DNA and the information that it can yield are happening everyday. This is all quite exciting especially since after more then a decade of searching we have never been able to find any record of the names etc. of the 6000+ victims that died and were buried in the area in 1847. And although 14 out of 6000+ is a small number, they could provide at least some representation of all the victims.

The plan is after all the testing etc. has been completed, these remains will be reburied near the Black Rock in the most dignified manner possible.

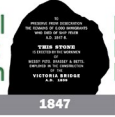
## IRISH GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

At this year's St. Patrick's Luncheon, the Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation was pleased to present signed copies of Alan Hustak's new book called wrote 'One Long Line of Marvel' that highlights the history of the 200 years of St. Patrick's Parades in Montreal to both the An Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister) and the Irish Ambassador to Canada.



In the image – left to right Dr. Eamonn McKee (Irish Ambassador); Fergus Keyes (MIMPF); An Tánaiste, Micheál Martin (Deputy Prime Minister of Ireland); Mike Kennedy (2024 Grand Marshal) and Jospeh Quinn (2024 Community Award





## Generous Supporters



### SPS PRESIDENT ANNOUNCES \$200,000 DONATION

At this year's St. Patrick's Luncheon, (March 15th 2024) the Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation was delighted when Pamela McGovern, President of the St. Patrick's Society of Montreal, announced that the SPS would be making a financial contribution of \$ 200,000 toward the building of the beautiful world class memorial space around the Black Rock.

The donation will take place over 4-7 years and is the largest in the organisation's 190 year history. As well, the Society has committed to donating some of the net proceeds from their annual charity golf tournament this June. Please see the article below, book a foursome and support the cause!

Support from historic groups in the Montreal-Irish community like the St. Patrick's Society is so important to the foundation.



In the photo captured after the announcement, from left to right, are Scott Phelan, Board member and Chair of our Finance & Fundraising Committee; Ambassador Eamonn McKee; and Fergus Keyes, Chairman of the Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation.

### GENEROUS \$200,000 DONATION FROM THE IRISH GOVERNMENT

On December 7th, 2023, several members of the Foundation had the pleasure of attending a delightful Christmas Party hosted by the Ireland Canada Chamber of Commerce (ICCC) at La Maison Louis Joseph Forget on Sherbrooke St. West.

The distinguished guest of honor at this event was His Excellency, Eamonn McKee, the current Irish Ambassador to Canada. During his inspiring speech, Ambassador McKee acknowledged the significance of our efforts to create a beautiful memorial space around the Black Rock.

We were all thrilled, when he also formally announced that the Government of Ireland is making an initial contribution of \$200,000 (Canadian) for the project's startup planning phase.

(Photo credit to Ivan Presser)





## MAJOR GRANT FROM THE QUEBEC PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

The Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise (SRQEA) generously donated \$200,000 to the foundation, marking a significant contribution. Their steadfast support and dedication to honoring this history are crucial to the success of the project.

**Secrétariat aux relations  
avec les Québécois  
d'expression anglaise**

**Québec**



## IN MEMORIAM



Thousands of dollars in donations were made to the foundation in the memory of cherished community members Tim Furlong and Margret O'Brien Hopkins upon their wishes.

# A HUGE THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

The governments, corporations, and individuals who have lent their support to the foundation during its initial years of fundraising are indispensable to the project's success. Without their contributions, this long-awaited commemoration would remain a mere aspiration within the Irish community, rather than the tangible site it is evolving into.



**Government of Ireland**  
Emigrant Support Programme



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

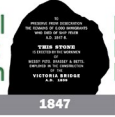


**Ville de Montréal**

See more:

[Donors and Supporters | Montreal  
Irish Monument Foundation](#)





## Upcoming Events

### ST PATRICK'S SOCIETY ANNUAL CHAIRTY GOLF TOURNAMENT

Date: June 14th, 2024

Location: Club de Golf Bellevue, 880  
Boul de Lery, Lery, QC J6N 1B7

This year's annual golf tournament will be partly in benefit of the Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation. The Society's \$200,000 donation is the largest in its history and will go towards brick-and-mortar costs of the park.

"Founded in June 1995 as a summer social event, and thanks to the golfers, prize donors and corporate sponsors, the tournament has become one of the major contributors to the Society's cultural, charitable and educational endeavours.

Your participation helps ensure the Society can continue to support all the worthy organizations that rely on the Society for funding.

Your Society is always grateful for the support it receives from hole sponsors and other friends in the community. Contact the office for more sponsorship opportunities."

[Register at spsmtl.com](https://spsmtl.com)



### FUNDRAISING DINNER

Date: Fall of 2024

Join us to celebrate an historical transfer of land and the initial designs for the park! Enjoy an evening of illustrious speakers and Irish culture and contribute to the fundraising efforts of the park by buying a ticket to this fall event.

**Make sure to follow us on social media or check out our website to find out more about this and other events!**

## Meet our Members - Leaders in the Montreal Irish Community



**Danny Doyle | President, The Erin Sports Association, Past-president United Irish Societies**

Daniel "Danny" Doyle, Chief Reviewing Officer of the 2012 188th St. Patrick's Parade, epitomizes the rich Irish-Montreal heritage, rooted in strong family bonds and unwavering community dedication. Hailing from Griffintown, Danny inherited a legacy of service from his father, continuing the tradition through his active involvement in various community endeavors, notably as an integral member of St. Ann's marching unit and as host of the annual post-parade gathering. With over four decades of service at the Canadian National Railway, Danny's retirement in 2021 marked a new chapter in his lifelong commitment to philanthropy, echoed by his wife Catherine and three sons. Danny's extensive volunteer portfolio spans from his early days as an altar boy to his recent tenure as President of the Erin Sports Association and the United Irish Societies, embodying the spirit of service and camaraderie cherished by Montreal's Irish diaspora.

**Ken Quinn | Immediate Past-president, St. Patrick's Society of Montreal, Past-president, United Irish Societies of Montreal**

Ken, honored as Irishman of the Year for his sustained community volunteerism, has deep roots in Montreal's Irish community. His involvement spans organizations like the United Irish Societies and St. Patrick's Society, where he held leadership roles including President. Additionally, he serves as historian for the United Irish Societies. Professionally, Ken is an Asset Analyst at Future Electronics, showcasing his dedication both in his career and community. He's also been recognized for his contributions to NDG Minor Baseball, displaying his commitment to youth development. Beyond this, he's a member of various organizations, including the Innisfail Social and Sports Club, Royal Canadian Legion Branch #4, and the Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation.



**Dr. Jane McGaughey | Associate Professor & Johnson Chair in Quebec and Canadian Irish Studies, School of Irish Studies, Concordia University**

Jane G. V. McGaughey holds the Johnson Chair of Québec and Canadian Irish Studies until 2026. She began her tenure at Concordia's School of Irish Studies in 2012 as an Assistant Professor focusing on Irish Diaspora Studies. McGaughey earned her Ph.D. from Birkbeck College, University of London in 2008. Her latest book, "Violent Loyalties: Manliness, Migration, and the Irish in Canada, 1798-1841," came out in 2020, exploring Irish male migration to Canada and challenging stereotypes. Before joining Concordia, McGaughey taught at the Royal Military College of Canada and was a National Endowment for the Humanities Faculty Fellow at the University of Notre Dame. Since 2022, she has hosted "The Irish in Canada" podcast, delving into the lives of Irish immigrants and their descendants, with the third season set to debut in March 2024. Episodes are available on various platforms and the podcast's website.





**Paul Dunne | President, Ireland-Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Past-president, St. Patrick's Society of Montreal**

A Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland and a Canadian CPA, Paul Dunne has been a Montreal resident since the late 1970s. After working briefly as controller of a real estate development company, he joined Alcan Aluminium Limited in Montreal initially in charge of global consolidation of the financial results and later as manager of financial planning for the Alcan group. He taught advanced accounting in the CA program in McGill University for ten years and guest-lectured in the MBA programs in McGill, Concordia and HEC. After leaving Alcan, Paul joined Domfoam International as CFO. In 1994, he left to found Eircan (now JPDO), an independent accounting firm providing cloud-based support to small businesses.

Paul has been engaged in volunteer activity since he arrived in Montreal, principally with the YMCA where he served as board chair in Montreal and vice-chair of YMCA Canada and St. Patrick's Society where he served in many capacities, most recently as President.

**Kevin Tracey | Immediate Past-president, United Irish Societies of Montreal**

With 33 years of architecture, development, and management experience within Big Data technologies, Business Intelligence, Data Management, Data Warehousing, and Cloud Development & Architecture Teams, Kevin Tracey brings a robust background in technical, software, and data architectures, Agile Development, and extensive data warehouse knowledge to aid customers in answering critical business questions using data within their environment. Beyond his professional achievements, Kevin is deeply involved in Montreal's Irish community. He has held significant roles in the United Irish Societies of Montreal, including President, VP of Advertising and Public Relations, and Assistant Parade Director for the Montreal St-Patrick's Day Parade. His dedication to promoting Irish arts and culture within the community is evident through his extensive volunteer work.



**Rick Grant | President, The Irish Protestant Benevolent Society of Montreal**

Rick Grant, Vice President of the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society (IPBS), brings over three decades of experience from C.H. Robinson, a global logistics leader. During his tenure he oversaw \$22 billion in freight under management and facilitated 19 million shipments annually. Since retiring in 2015, he has been an active volunteer, overseeing membership and liaising with The Montreal Irish Monument Park. Despite being the only non-Irish member on the IPBS board, Rick's dedication is evident through both professional and personal connections, including his wife's Irish heritage. His journey with IPBS began through a friendship forged in junior hockey with Mike Nelson, illustrating Rick's commitment to community engagement and his seamless integration into IPBS upon retirement.

**Diane English | Founding Member**



Consider donating to help make this project a reality! [Click Here](#) to give through our website or mail this letter to **1195 Sherbrooke O.**

**Montréal. QC H3A 1H9**

Enclosed is my donation of:

☐ \$50    ☐ \$100    ☐ \$250    ☐ \$500    ☐ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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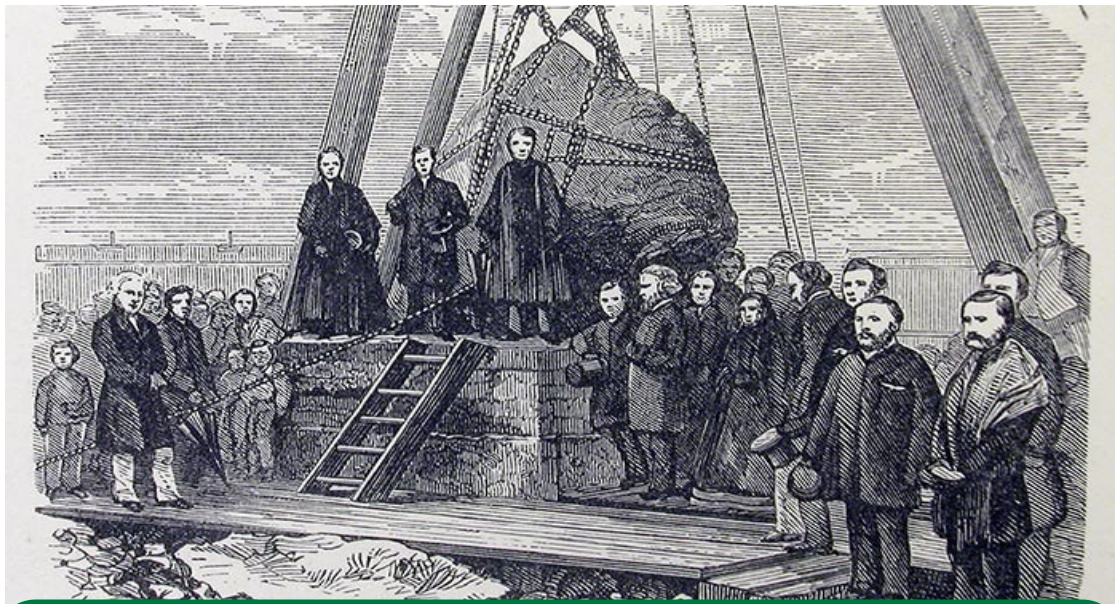
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Check Enclosed. Please make checks payable to : Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation

☐


Don't miss our Fall and Winter newsletters to stay up to date with developments regarding the design of the park, the DNA results from our excavated remains, fundraising milestones, upcoming events and more!

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