



# RHODE ISLAND HISTORY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE SAMUEL SNOW — SULLIVAN DORR CORRESPONDENCE . . . . .	65
<i>edited by Vincent P. Carosso and Lawrence H. Leder</i>	
BOOK REVIEW . . . . .	88
CATALOG OF THE RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY FURNITURE COLLECTION . . . . .	90
<i>by Ralph E. Carpenter, Jr.</i>	
NEW MEMBERS . . . . .	Back Cover

THE GARDEN AT SHAKESPEARE'S HEAD

21 Meeting Street, Providence

*Open to the public*

*The beautiful garden at Shakespeare's Head is maintained by the Rhode Island Federation of Garden Clubs. It is in the rear of the home built by John Carter about 1763; here he published the Providence GAZETTE AND COUNTRY JOURNAL. In the background is the steeple of the First Baptist Meeting House, which was built in 1775.*

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## THE SAMUEL SNOW — SULLIVAN DORR CORRESPONDENCE

*edited by VINCENT P. CAROSSO and LAWRENCE H. LEDER\**

WITH THE SIGNING of the definitive peace treaty in Paris on September 3, 1783, the war of the American Revolution was brought to a conclusion. Many changes in American life were ushered in by this document, not the least of which were those in the field of trade and commerce. The Revolution had disrupted the long-established practices and ideas of America's maritime trade, but few realized at first that the peace had confirmed the destruction of the old ways. Gradually, American merchants became painfully aware of the fact that they were no longer members of the British Empire, that independence had brought with it a curtailment of their former privileges.

Once that had been realized and accepted by the Americans, they began to seek out new trade channels to replace the pre-war European and West Indian markets, once so profitable, but now lost to them. Thus was the China trade born. Yankee merchants, businessmen, and traders struck out in new directions and discovered the possibilities of profit in the Orient.

This new trade pattern was inaugurated on February 22, 1784, less than six months after the signing of the Treaty of Paris, when the 360 ton *Empress of China* departed from New York City. After a six months' voyage, she dropped anchor in Canton and, four months later, set sail for home, arriving in New York City on May 10, 1785.<sup>1</sup>

\*Vincent P. Carosso is an assistant professor of history, Graduate School of Arts and Science, New York University; Lawrence H. Leder is in the research department of the Sleepy Hollow Restorations, Tarrytown, New York.

<sup>1</sup>Clarence L. Ver Steeg, "Financing and Outfitting the First United States Ship to China," *Pacific Historical Review*, XXII (Feb. 1953), 10, 12.

A very profitable trading venture, the voyage of the *Empress* was soon to be followed by others. Mercantile groups along the Atlantic seaboard quickly realized that China offered them a potentially rich market. Their optimism, however, was tempered by the many problems and dangers attendant upon opening trade in an unknown area. Thus, though the promoters of the *Empress* had answered many of the practical questions involved in tapping a new market, American trade with China grew slowly.

In 1785, not one American vessel set sail for China; in the following year, five ships departed for the Far East, three from Philadelphia and one each from Salem and New York City. A slight decline in 1787 and 1788 was followed by a renewal of activity in 1789 when fifteen American vessels cleared for Canton. By 1790, the China market was an established facet of America's overseas trade pattern.<sup>2</sup>

The leadership in this commerce had originally been in the hands of Robert Morris and a group of New York City businessmen who had sponsored the *Empress*, but it soon passed from the metropolis on the Hudson to the ports of New England.<sup>3</sup> In 1787, the first vessel from Providence, the *George Washington*, set sail for Canton, arriving there in December 1788. The financing of this voyage was undertaken by John Brown, one of the most illustrious of eighteenth century Rhode Island's businessmen.<sup>4</sup>

Brown's initiative opened new vistas to the Providence merchant-capitalists. Soon, others followed his example and actively engaged in the China trade, either directly or by financing other merchants, securing goods for the China market, or handling the sale of Chinese imports in the United States. One of the important Providence businessmen to become engaged in this new activity was Sullivan Dorr (1778-1858).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Kenneth W. Porter, *The Jacksons and the Lees: Two Generations of Massachusetts Merchants (1765-1844)*, (2 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1937), 1, 23.

<sup>3</sup>Ver Steeg, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>4</sup>William B. Weeden, *Early Oriental Commerce in Providence* ([reprinted from Massachusetts Historical Society, *Proceedings*, December 1907], Cambridge, Mass., 1908), pp. 6, 16.

<sup>5</sup>The biographical data on Dorr has been taken from Howard Corning, "Sullivan Dorr, China Trader," *Rhode Island History*, III (July 1944), 75-90.

The seventh son of Ebenezer Dorr, a former Boston leather-dresser turned merchant, Sullivan Dorr had an unusually active role in the early China trade. Little is known of his youth and mercantile training, but it is generally assumed that he received a basic education typical of that given to the son of a late eighteenth century merchant-capitalist. His business records and correspondence indicate that he was well versed in the mercantile conditions and practices of his day. His business ability must have been considerable, for at twenty-one years of age (1799), Sullivan Dorr went to Canton to represent his family's substantial commercial interests in the Far East.

Dorr's activities in Canton encompassed a wide variety of business dealings. In charge of all aspects of his family's trade, he had to secure cargoes which would not only find a profitable market in America, but would complement the complex and diversified trade of his father and brothers in the Pacific Northwest, the sealing islands of the southern hemisphere, and elsewhere.

There is every indication that the youthful Dorr was a conscientious, diligent, and enterprising businessman bent upon amassing a fortune of his own at an early age. Under the terms of the agreement which brought him to China, he was to receive "3% on the business transacted for the family plus the expenses of living in Canton." His letters, however, suggest that he was not exclusively tied to the management of family business. Not only was he liberal in his criticisms of his associates and their policies, but he was anxious to experiment with new enterprises. By investing his own money in some of his family's ships, by representing other Boston and Providence merchants, and by his association with the Rhode Islander, Samuel Snow, United States Consul at Canton, Dorr enhanced both his prestige and his opportunities for profit.

Samuel Snow, on the other hand, is something of an enigma since so little is known about his background, training, experience, and associations. Appointed American Consul at Canton by President John Adams in May 1798, Snow received an office whose only remuneration consisted of prestige, certain privileges, and access to trade information, all of which he turned to good advantage in the conduct of his own trading activities in Canton.<sup>6</sup> Acting as inter-

<sup>6</sup>Weeden, *loc. cit.*

mediary between the American traders and the Hong merchants, building and renting residences or "factories" to American supercargoes, fulfilling the functions of a banker by receiving funds for Providence merchants and paying their debts, and performing such other useful functions as purchasing goods, directing the loading of vessels, and preparing reports on trade volume and practices, Snow performed a vital service in China for the American government and its citizens.

When, in January 1801, Snow left Canton for a visit to America, he appointed Sullivan Dorr as consular agent and, with James Oliver, as commercial agent in charge of Snow's private business affairs in China. While Dorr received no honorarium for the former office, there is no doubt that he benefited from the prestige, dignity, and access to trade information. As Snow's commercial agent, Dorr and Oliver received a rather generous commission.

After nearly four years in China, Sullivan Dorr returned to Providence. There, he married Lydia Allen, daughter of the prominent Rhode Island businessman, Zachariah Allen. Continuing his mercantile career for a time, Dorr, like many another merchant trader of the early nineteenth century, gradually relinquished his shipping interest and devoted his attention and invested his capital in the new and growing enterprises which accompanied the emergence of industrialism. At the time of his death, he was an investor in cotton mills, turnpikes, and similar promising ventures, second president of the Providence Washington Insurance Company, and a trustee of Brown University.<sup>7</sup>

The following group of letters, addressed to Sullivan Dorr by Samuel Snow, illustrate the nature and significance of the relationship of these two men during the early years of the China trade. In addition, they supply an important *lacunae* in the scattered and incomplete record of one of the more important mercantile families of Rhode Island.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Howard Corning, "Biographical Note: Sullivan Dorr (1778-1858)," *Rhode Island History*, I (April 1942), 72. Howard Corning, ed., "Letters of Sullivan Dorr," Massachusetts Historical Society, *Proceedings*, LXVII (Oct. 1941-May 1944), 178-79.

<sup>8</sup>The following letters have been made available through the courtesy of their owner, Mr. Frank Mauran III of Providence.

D<sup>r</sup> Sir

Capt Odell's not being able to attend at dinner to day leaves room for one more at my table, & if you are not otherways engaged; I should like you to fill his chair at 4 OClock.

Yours &c  
/S/ Samuel Snow<sup>9</sup>

Saturday

[Canton, September 28, 1799]

\* \* \*

D<sup>r</sup> Sir

A Previous engagement precludes me from the pleasure of a seat at your table this day. please accept my thanks

Yours &c  
/S/ Sullivan Dorr

Saturday 28 Sept. [1799]

\* \* \*

(Circular)

Captain Bowers

Sir,

Agreably to the orders and regulations directed to be established within this district by the President of the United States of America — I now annex for your information and government the following Extract.

The Master or Consignee of every American Vessel that shall enter at any of the Ports within the district of Canton is hereby enjoined to make a report at the Consular Office "Specifying the name and burthen of each Vessel, of what description she is (to wit Ship, Snow, Brig &c) the name of the Master and Owners and number of seamen, the port of the United States from which she cleared, places touched at, her cargo outward and inward and Owners thereof, the port to which she

<sup>9</sup>Dorr had arrived in Macao on August 31 and was in Canton by September 3. This was apparently the first contact that he had with Snow and, although he declined this last minute invitation, he remained on the best of terms with the Consul. At this time, he was considering "clubbing together" with Snow in Macao after the trading season had ended. Sullivan Dorr to Ebenezer Dorr, September 10, 1699 (with postscripts), Corning, "Letters of Sullivan Dorr," pp. 179, 181, 182.

is bound and times of arrival and departure the whole arranged in a table under different colums—to which your attention is requested.

I am Sir,

Your very humble servant  
/S/ Samuel Snow Consul of the  
United States of America<sup>10</sup>

\* \* \*

Canton 24<sup>th</sup> January 1801

Sir,

I now enclose to you your commission of Agency, together with certified copies of my letters patent & instructions, you will be pleased to act conformably to those instructions & what further directions may be transmitted from the Secretary of State or from myself.<sup>11</sup>

I permit you to open all public letters directed to me, which you will be able to distinguish by the Words (Department of State) wrote over the direction, & should anything be communicated that may render it necessary to retain a copy of them in Canton, you are at liberty to take one, after which, you will forward the originals to me at Providence by the first opportunity that may offer. By the instructions from the Secretary of State you will observe you are to correspond with me alone, you will therefore direct all your communications to me at Providence and note particularly anything of importance, which may directly, or ultimately, effect the Government or Commerce of the United States.

You will transmit to me every six months a report of all the American Vessels that may enter within the district of Canton, specifying the

<sup>10</sup>This form letter was later adopted almost word for word by Dorr when he became consular agent. Sullivan Dorr to Captain Campbell, February 18, 1801, *ibid.*, pp. 248-49.

<sup>11</sup>On January 10, 1801, Dorr advised his brothers that "Mr. Snow quits this year in the John Jay, he deposes me as vice Consul, and any business coming to his hands will be jointly acted by Mr. Oliver and myself for our mutual benefit. I shall write you more fully when the business is settled till then say nothing about it if you please." He commented about this new post, "the nature of my office brings many to consult with me old enough to teach me themselves, and I assure you the dignity which the consulate attaches to me makes me feel ha! ha! ha! (read this to Sam. I know he will enjoy it) however you rely upon the propriety of my conduct." Sullivan Dorr to Joseph and John Dorr, January 10, 1801; Sullivan Dorr to Andrew C. Dorr, February 25, 1801, *ibid.*, pp. 242-43, 253.

Name, burthen, &c, as pointed out in the Consular instructions & the reports closing on the last days of June & December. You are not to make a formal demand of the Captains as a matter of right, but simply to request of them a report, & will make your returns out according to the best light you can obtain.

The obligatory bonds given by the Consuls to the United States, will evince to you that circumspection will be necessary in all your transactions, and I have the satisfaction to believe that to add anything further on this subject will be unnecessary.

I remain Sir,

with Esteem

your very humble serv<sup>t</sup>  
/S/ Samuel Snow

Mr Sullivan Dorr  
[Received February 6, 1801]

\* \* \*

I Samuel Snow Consul of the United States of America at Canton in China, by virtue of the power attached to my office as acknowledged in a clause in my instructions received from the Secretary of State

I do hereby constitute and appoint MR. SULLIVAN DORR my Consular Agent for the City of Canton, and do authorize and empower him to hold the said Office, and to execute and enjoy all the rights, privileges and authorities to the same appertaining, until the Commission shall be revoked by me. He demanding and receiving no fees or perquisites of office whatever which shall not be expressly established by some law of the United States. And I do hereby request all Captains Masters and Commanders of Ships, and other Vessels armed or unarmed sailing under the flag of the said States, as well as all other of their Citizens to acknowledge and consider him accordingly.

GIVEN under my hand and the seal of my Office, at Canton in China, this twenty fourth day of January in the year of our LORD One thousand eight hundred and one, and of the Independence of the United States, the twenty fifth.

/S/ Samuel Snow

[SEAL]

STANDING INSTRUCTIONS TO CONSULS AND VICE CONSULS  
OF THE UNITED STATES.

Department of State 7 May 1798

Sir,

In addition to the special duties pointed out in the Act of Congress relative to Consuls passed on the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 1792 which you will find in the second Volume of the laws of the United States, I must beg the favour of you to communicate to me every six months a report of the Vessels of the United States which enter at the ports of your District, specifying the name and burthen of each Vessel, of what description she is (to wit Ship Snow Brig &c) the names of the Master and owners and number of Seamen, the port of the United States from which she clear'd, places touched at, her cargo outward and inward and the owners thereof, the port to which she is bound and times of arrival and departure, the whole arranged in a table under different columns, and the reports closing on the last days of June & December.

We wish you to use your endeavours that no Vessel enter as an American in the ports of your District, which shall not be truly such, and that none be sold under that name which are not really of the United States.

That you give to me from time to time information of all Military preparations and other indications of war, which may take place in your ports, and when a war shall appear imminent, that you will notify thereof the Merchants and Vessels of the United States within your District, that they may be duly on their guard, and in general that you communicate to me such political and commercial intelligence as you may think interesting to the United States.

The Consuls and Vice-Consuls of the United States are free to wear the uniform of their navy if they chuse so to do; This is a deep blue coat, with bluff facings, linings and cuffs, the cuffs slashed and a standing collar, a buff waistcoat (laced or not at the election of the wearer) and buff breeches, yellow buttons with a fowl anchor, and black cockades, and small swords.

Be pleased to observe that the vice Consul of one District is not at all subordinate to the Consul of another. They are equally Independent of each other.

It is understood that Consuls and Vice-Consuls have authority of course to appoint their own agents in the several ports of their District, and that it is with themselves alone those agents are to correspond.

It will be best not to fatigue the Government in which you reside, or those in Authority under it, with applications in unimportant cases.

Husband their good dispositions for occasions of some moment, and let all representations to them be couched in the most temperate and friendly terms, never indulging in any case whatever a single expression which may irritate. You will observe that the Consular act requires certain bonds with sureties to be entered into by the Consuls and Vice-Consuls of the United States, previous to entering on the execution of their respective trusts. I therefore transmit to you herewith two blank forms, one of which is to be filled up and transmitted to this office, the other to be retained by yourself.

I have the honor to be very respectfully, Sir,

Your Most Humb Servant  
Timothy Pickering

Samuel Snow Esq<sup>r</sup>  
Consul of the United States of America  
for Canton in China

I Samuel Snow Consul of the United States of America at Canton in China, do hereby certify that the within Instructions to Consuls and Vice Consuls, are truly copied from the original Instructions in my possession

[Seal]

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto subscribed my name and affixed my Consular seal at Canton in China this Twenty fourth day of January in the year One thousand eight hundred and one

/S/Samuel Snow Consul of the  
United States of America

\* \* \*

JOHN ADAMS, PRESIDENT of the United States of America

To all who shall see these Presents — Greeting:

KNOW YE, That reposing especial trust and confidence in the abilities and Integrity of Samuel Snow of Rhode Island, I have nominated and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate DO appoint him CONSUL of the United States of America for the City of Canton in China, and for such other parts as shall be nearer to the said City than to the residence of any other Consul or Vice Consul of the United States

within the same Allegiance: And do authorize and empower him to have and to hold the said Office and to exercise and enjoy all the rights, Pre-eminences, Privileges and Authorities to the same of right appertaining during the pleasure of the President of the United States for the time being: He demanding and receiving no Fees or Perquisites of Office whatever which shall not be expressly established by some law of the said United States:

AND I DO hereby enjoin all Captains Masters and Commanders of Ships and other Vessels armed or unarmd sailing under the Flag of the said States as well as all other of their Citizens to acknowledge and consider him the said Samuel Snow accordingly. And I do hereby pray and request his Imperial Majesty the EMPEROR OF CHINA, and his Governors and Officers to permit the said Samuel Snow fully and peaceably to enjoy and exercise the said Office, without giving or suffering to be given unto him any molestation or trouble, but on the contrary to afford him all proper countenance and assistance, I offering to do the same for all those who shall in like manner be recommended to me by his said Imperial Majesty.

[L. S.]

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have caused these Letters to be made patent, and the Seal of the United States to be hereunto affixed — GIVEN under my hand at Philadelphia, this Fourteenth day of May in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety eight, and of the Independence of the United States, the Twenty-second.

[signed] JOHN ADAMS  
By the President of the United States

[signed] Timothy Pickering  
Secretary of State

I Samuel Snow Consul of the United States of America at Canton in China, Do hereby Certify that the within letters patent from the President of the United States are truly copied from the Original letters in my possession.

[Seal]

In testimony whereof I have hereunto subscribed my name, and affixed my Consular Seal at Canton in China, this

twenty fourth day of January in the year  
One thousand eight hundred and One  
/S/Samuel Snow Consul of the  
United States of America

\* \* \*

Agreement between Samuel Snow Esq<sup>r</sup> James Oliver  
and myself for the purpose as expressed within  
Canton January 29<sup>th</sup> 1801

Thinking it probable, some ships may be consigned or other business addressed to me in my absence from Canton, & feeling it essential to the Interest of my Correspondents that some Person or persons should be fully authorised to transact the same that no injury may arise to them or their property: I do hereby appoint Mess<sup>rs</sup> James Oliver & Sullivan Dorr Merchants residents in Canton to be my Commercial Agents jointly to do & transact all business that may or shall be committed to my charge. And for their compensation & trouble in performing & executing the same it is agreed they shall be entitled to & receive two thirds of the Commission arising thereon, & that the other One third shall be considered as descending to me & shall be by them passed to my credit & remain subject to my draft & directions.<sup>12</sup>

And it is to be understood they are to hold & execute the power delegated as above, for & during my pleasure & no longer.

Canton 29<sup>th</sup> January 1801 /S/ Samuel Snow

We accept of the above agency, & in full assent to the terms of Compensation therein expressed, have hereunto subscribed our names

/S/ Jas Oliver  
Canton 29<sup>th</sup> January 1801 /S/ Sullivan Dorr

<sup>12</sup>Dorr and Oliver, in accepting this agency, agreed "to leave the Commission which we may draw to your [i.e., Snow's] own judgment, you very well knowing what we forego by a residence here, will doubtless be liberal." Sullivan Dorr to Samuel Snow, January 17, 1801, MSS. Dorr Letterbook (owned by Mr. Frank Mauran III). While Snow's generosity was apparently in keeping with Dorr's and Oliver's expectations, Dorr privately announced his intention to "decline doing any business where I am under the necessity or it is required that I am to become responsible for any Credits to be raised, because it will militate against my interest tenfold more than the Commission will be profitable, precluding the possibility of raising any for my own account and should the Concerns fail I am dished at once the Chinamen seizing me." Sullivan Dorr to Andrew C. Dorr, February 25, 1801, Corning, "Letters of Sullivan Dorr," p. 252.

Ship John Jay in sight of  
Linting 2<sup>d</sup> Feb. 1801

Gentlemen,

With respect to my Factories, I must leave them in some measure discretionary with you. The price I put them at this season I believe was less than others of equal goodness, & I have no doubt but they will readily command the same next season, if opportunity should offer to rent them a second time you must govern your selves by circumstances, for if few Factories are to be had, they will command as much the second as they did the first time, that has been the case this season, & may happen again, but it is not always to be expected, I can therefore only say you must conduct with them as if they were your own, that is, endeavour to have them well used & make the most of them. The proceeds after taking out your commission & what temporary repairs they may require, you will pay to Mouqua & endorse it on a Note he has against me for Nankins, this money I wish paid as soon as collected as it will entitle me to a discount of interest, the Cumshaw to Comprador Attach, & an Order in favour of our Ships Comprador for extra sea stores, you will discharge first, all monies that may become due to me on account of Commission, if any, as well as what may arise from the Factories (except a sum sufficient at the end of the next China year to discharge the ground rent to Paunkequa,) I wish appropriated as before expressed to the discharging of my obligation to Mouqua. All letters addressed to me accompanying commission business (& which I think can generally be pretty well ascertained by inquiring of the Person who bro<sup>t</sup> them) I wish you to open & proceed agreeably to the directions they may contain in the same manner as I could or should have done had I been present at the time. All other letters I wish you to return me by the first opportunity for America unopened.

Wishing you all the prosperity  
& happiness this world can afford  
I remain very cordially

Yours  
/S/ Samuel Snow

Mess<sup>rs</sup> James Oliver  
& Sullivan Dorr  
Canton

My Factories are rented this year at the following prices:

N <sup>o</sup> 2	800
4	550
5	350
6	600

N<sup>o</sup> 1 except M<sup>r</sup> Dorr should take it, I shuld put at 1200 The ship or ships, or 1500 the season. if 1200 Cannot be obtained rather than not rent it you must take less<sup>13</sup>

[Received February 28, 1801]

\* \* \*

Ship John Jay Off Macao Feb 3<sup>d</sup> 1801

Sir,

Enclosed you will receive all the papers necessary for your direction & government. if you are inclined to Exchange Factories as I proposed before, Viz to allow me Nine hundred Doll p<sup>r</sup> year beside your Factory it is still at your service & this I conceive to be on reasonable terms, it is just putting mine at 1500 Doll per year & yours at 600 which I think considering all Circumstances is in the same proportion, you Will recollect that I object letting my front Factory to any Person resident in Canton who have Factories of their own & in no other manner than exchanging as above do I consent to let it be occupied<sup>14</sup>

/S/ Samuel Snow

M<sup>r</sup> Sullivan Dorr

Tell Cap<sup>t</sup> Simmons it was impossible to finish his papers, perhaps you can do them for him. pay the Bearer for bringing the papers up. No arrivals at Macao.

\* \* \*

Providence 10<sup>th</sup> Jan<sup>ry</sup> 1801 [*sic*, 1802]

Sullivan Dorr Esq<sup>r</sup>

Dear Sir,

Your several favours of the 28<sup>th</sup> Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> March & 18<sup>th</sup> April

<sup>13</sup>Dorr agreed that all money received from the rental of the factories "will be applied to the reducing of your note to Mouqua, except the small sums which will be appropriated to other uses as you desire." While Snow was also told that he could "expect a literal compliance" with his "several intimations," Dorr wished to be excused from asking for \$1,200 for factory number one. "No factory brings that sum, mere necessity on the part of the hirer [is the only thing that] will enable us to obtain so much, and it is not often such seasons as the past happens for hiring factories." Sullivan Dorr to Samuel Snow, February 28, 1801, *ibid.*, p. 253.

<sup>14</sup>Dorr prudently decided to keep factory number three at \$400 rather than exchange it for factory number one as Snow had proposed. Sullivan Dorr to Samuel Snow, February 28, 1801, *ibid.*



last per the Clothier & Perseverance I have at hand & contents Noticed.

I was glad to hear my letters off Linting & Macao enclosing sundry papers &c had reached you in safety & that it was your intention to comply fully with my wishes therein expressed, except that part which relates to N<sup>o</sup> 1 Factory, it seems you could not have rightly comprehended my meaning respecting the rent. I am very well assured that no Captain or Supercargo of a single ship (except from the utmost necessity) would ever give the price I stipulated, but you know it not uncommonly happens that Supercargoes of different ships prefer upon principles of economy in living &c taking a factory together, in that case only except the one above stated did I expect the 1200 doll<sup>s</sup> could be obtained — I had no doubt then, nor have I now but such Cases would frequently occur, & I am very confident that any Gentlemen of taste taking into view its situation being front, its accommodations & conveniences with the great advantage of having the command of the money Vault, would with the utmost cheerfulness & without the least hesitation prefer giving 600 doll<sup>s</sup> each for N<sup>o</sup> 1 Factory in preference to any other at Canton, for, should they even chuse to live by themselves there are two front Halls, besides other rooms sufficient to accommodate them seperately, when at the same time the rent to each would not fall heavier than if they had taken a common chance in other factories — You will recollect however that after stating what I thought it probable the factories would bring, I left the whole discretionary with you to act as circumstances might dictate, & agreeably to which I have no doubt but you have acted.

You were intirely right in obliging Mouqua to accept of the 600 Doll<sup>s</sup> altho' a small sum in part payment for our Note & I wish you to continue the payments to him, as before requested, so often as funds shall come into your hands.

As I expect to come out again this spring in the Ann & Hope to sail the begining of April if she should arrive timely, I shall omit going into more particulars at present, further than to say the lease for the ground on which your factory stands shall be delivered to your Brother on my visit to Boston, and as I expect soon to take a trip to the City of Washington when Congress are in session I shall endeavour whilst there to have arrangements made to fix a permanant residence at Macao for all Americans who may chuse to avail themselves of the indulgence.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Dorr had complained that the Governor of Macao frowned upon Americans who were resident in Canton going to his colony during periods when business was slack and the weather oppressive. He asked Snow to obtain official intervention with the Portuguese government so as to win the necessary permission. Sullivan Dorr to Samuel Snow, February 28, 1801, *ibid.*, p. 255.

M<sup>r</sup> Barry sailed from New York for England soon after my arrival before I had an opportunity of seeing him. I rec<sup>d</sup> one letter from him stating that he had been very unwell during the passage, & that he had been much more afflicted with usual complaints since his residence in America than before having for the greater part of his time been confined to the house living upon water gruel &c & that he hoped to see me at Canton again the next season. poor fellow. I much doubt whether he will ever reach there.

Doct. Vieselius & myself arrived here in good health & spirits 12<sup>th</sup> July after a long but for the most part pleasant passage. The Doct. tarried with us about a fortnight & then embarked from Boston in a vessel with your Brother for Hamburgh.

I was very much disappointed in not receiving a line from M<sup>r</sup> Oliver, & altho' he has forgotten me, yet assure him he has my best wishes for his health & prosperity. desire him also to accept with yourself a bundle of Newspapers which I now send you.

Be so good as to inform Mouqua that the owners of the Ann & Hope ware exceedingly mortified in being disappointed in sending out the balance due him on her last voyage. Gibbs & Channing had prepared a ship at Newport for China in which my Neuphew B. Munro was to have embarked with the mony, it was all prepared sent down & lodged in Bank there ready to go on board, but from the reduced prices to which China articles seemed progressing & the favourable News from Batavia they about one week before the time set for sailing & not until after all the other ships were gone changed their arrangements & gave up the Voyage to the very great disappointment of all our Concern, & which prevented them from getting the mony out that season, if M<sup>r</sup> Thompson has not discharged the sum due him he may depend on the remittance being sent in the Ann & Hope. Tell him also I hope he will have a good assortment of Teas &c ready by arrival.

Refering you to our old friend Cap<sup>t</sup> Jenks who will hand you this letter, for political news, wishing to be remembered to all who ask after me

I remain your sincere friend

/S/ Samuel Snow

Do try to make the most of the Factories

China goods have become a mere drug, tis impossible to push them off even at the uncommon low price at which they now stand

Hyson Tea	112	Cents	} all on a long credit
D <sup>o</sup> Skin	70@75	"	
souchong	72 hr. 75 hr.	"	
Bohea	40	"	
Nankins	100@120	"	

[Received, September 16, 1802]

\* \* \*

Providence 3<sup>d</sup> Feb<sup>ry</sup> 1802

Mess<sup>rs</sup> Sullivan Dorr & James Oliver

D<sup>r</sup> Sirs,

This will be handed you by M<sup>r</sup> William H. Mason, who embarks as Supercargo of the Ship Hope for Canton, Owned & fitted out by John Brown Esq<sup>r</sup> & M<sup>r</sup> James Mason.

M<sup>r</sup> Mason is from a very respectable family in this Town, & as a young gentleman of reputation & character, I beg leave to introduce him to your notice & acquaintance. Any services rendered, or civility shewn him, will be considered as conferred on

D<sup>r</sup> Sirs,

Your Obedient

humble Servant

/S/ Samuel Snow

M<sup>r</sup> Mason is brother to the Gentleman part owner of the Ship

[Received September 4, 1802]

\* \* \*

Mess<sup>rs</sup> Sullivan Dorr & James Oliver

Gentlemen

Permit me to make known to you M<sup>r</sup> Samuel Prescott a gentleman of Character & respectability, who embarks for China in a few days

supercargo of a Ship from Salem. Having never been at Canton M<sup>r</sup> Prescott may want some information concerning the Customs & manners of transacting business, & I feel a confidence it will give you pleasure to be of service to him.

I will thank you also to introduce him to Mouqua, Conseequa, & the other Hong Merchants, & with a full assurance that he will receive every attention & civility from you

I remain

Gentlemen

Yours sincerely

/S/ Samuel Snow

Providence 5<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1802

[Received July 28, 1802]

\* \* \*

Providence 23<sup>d</sup> Feb. 1802

Sullivan Dorr Esq<sup>r</sup>

Dear Sir,

By Captain Jenckes I wrote you & M<sup>r</sup> Oliver in Answer to yours per the Clothier & Perseverance, & as nothing of importance has transpired since, I shall now only add, that I expect to return to China again in the Ann & Hope, she is expected here by the middle of March & should she arrive about that time, will probably sail so soon after that she may be called an early Ship, but if not, it may be December or January before she reaches Canton.

Be pleased to Chin Chin Mouqua & the other Hong Merchants for me & tell them I hope to see them again by that time. I suppose it will be no Knews to you to hear that the preliminaries of a peace was entered into between England & France in October, & that Commissioners ware to meet soon after to conclude a definitive treaty, the result of this Commission has not reached us.

There never was such a Change in the Mercantile interest ever known before as since the peace. failures, & some to a large amount, daily occur from one end of the Continent to the other, business is entirely at a Stand, & no sales made except what some few are obliged to sacrifice at auction. Teas of every kind will not nett the first cost, & what is to be done with those now on hand, & those expected in, tis impossible to tell, seven eighths of the John Jays Cargo is still on hand. all confidence seems to be lost, it is dangerous to sell on a Credit & ready Cash is

entirely out of the question—Hoping that appearances may soon change for the better

I remain your  
Friend  
/S/ Samuel Snow

Please deliver the enclosed. The great number of ships bound to china this spring I hope will make well for my Factories. Your Brothers Jos. & John, wrote me a few days past offering me a part of a Ship purchased by Andrew, in which they ware to take half interest, but our previous arrangements for the Ann & Hope prevented us the pleasure they so politely offered. they will write you without doubt by the Indus when she may be expected.

[Received, July 8, 1802]

\* \* \*

Providence 10<sup>th</sup> May 1802

Sullivan Dorr Esqr.

D<sup>r</sup> Sir,

I have this day sold one third of my five Factories N<sup>o</sup> 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6 in the American Hong Canton to M<sup>r</sup> William F. Megee, the whole subject to a ground rent of sixteen hundred dollars per year & payable on the first day of every China New Year, or the Factories to be forfeited—you will therefore in future be subject to his directions in the disposal of his one third of the nett proceeds of rent, & will continue to apply the other two thirds agreeably to my former instructions.<sup>16</sup>

M<sup>r</sup> Megee says your Brother informed him when in Boston that you intended leaving Canton this or the next season, should that be your determination & you should quit there before my arrival & M<sup>r</sup> Megee should conclude to remain in China, I wish you to commit the charge of all my business to him with a copy of my instructions to you for his government.

I hope however to have the pleasure of seeing you before you take

<sup>16</sup>The factories had been rented for a total of \$3,100. Sullivan Dorr to Samuel Snow, October 18, 1801, *ibid.*, p. 289.

your departure & referring to my other letters for particulars in answer to yours

I remain very sincerely  
Sir,  
Your humble Servant  
/S/ Samuel Snow

[Received December 23, 1802]

\* \* \*

Providence 14<sup>th</sup> May 1802

Sullivan Dorr Esq<sup>r</sup>

D<sup>r</sup> Sir,

M<sup>r</sup> Edward Carrington who will hand you this letter has lived upwards of two years in my counting house & family, & his conduct was such during the whole time as to gain my confidence & merit our esteem. since then he has been out supercargo two or three voyages to Europe & the West Indies, & has always transacted the business to the entire satisfaction & approbation of his employers. He now embarks in the Resource as an assistant to M<sup>r</sup> Megee, more particularly to gain information & knowledge of the Eastern business, than on account of the emoluments of this voyage. I beg therefore to introduce him to you as a young Gentleman for whom I have a great friendship & whose interest I wish to serve.

You will do me a favour by introducing him to the different Hong, China Ware, & Silk merchants, & every information given or assistance rendered him will be very thankfully acknowledged

By Sir,  
Your assured freind  
& humble servant  
/S/ Samuel Snow

[Received December 23, 1802]

\* \* \*

Providence 15<sup>th</sup> May 1802<sup>17</sup>

Sullivan Dorr Esq<sup>r</sup>

D<sup>r</sup> Sir,

Your several favours I have received in course, together with yours

<sup>17</sup>The letters dated May 15 and 18, 1802 were received by Dorr "on the very eve of departure," January 13, 1803. He advised Snow of his resignation as consular agent and his intention to return to Providence by way of Europe. Sullivan Dorr to Samuel Snow, January 17, 1803, *ibid.*, pp. 358-59.

of the 28<sup>th</sup> Dec<sup>r</sup> 1801 enclosing your a/c current & duplicate of your 30 Nov<sup>r</sup>. your amount is right. I observe in your semi annual return that where no report has been made to you, you have only noted the Vessels name &c but have not particularised any Cargo, you may by employing the Linguist obtain from their Custom house books a pretty accurate statement of the inward & outward Cargo of every ship, this I wish you to do in future, as I am confident the more information we give the Secretary of the trade to China in our returns the more pleasing it will be to him. I steadily made use of that method when in China where no report was given me, so that my returns comprehended very near all the American business transacted there. The Factories have not been altogether so productive as I expected & I have no doubt with you but it is the wish of some others to undervalue them & as I do not know how to prevent it, (however ingenious their conduct) so I must set down contented, under the full persuasion that you will do everything in your power to make the most of them.

You will find by a letter which Mr. Megee will hand you, that I have sold one third of my Factories to him, you will therefore in future appropriate only two thirds of the nett rents to my use, for the other he will give you directions.

I expected to sail for Canton before this, but China goods of every kind continue so very dull & low, that the Concern here seem quite discouraged, & have concluded not to send the Ann & Hope out again this season, this has dis[arr]anged me very much for we had made preparation to go out in her. We are now endeavouring to obtain some other Vessel, being determined upon going but am fearfull it will be late in the season before I arrive there. I have nothing new to communicate except that, the definitive treaty of peace was signed at Amiens at 4 oClock P.M. of the 27<sup>th</sup> March, by the Plenipotentiary of his Majesty, & the Plenipotentiaries of France, Spain, & the Batavian Republic.

The disagreeable news of Capt Smiths death, reached here before your letter came to hand, on my seeing them again I shall tender your condolence as requested

Miss Clark still remains single & from what I have told her, I do not know but she may be waiting your return. I understand your Brothers send you some money by M<sup>r</sup> Megee & of course will write you, I believe they are well

I am

Sincerely yours

/S/ Samuel Snow

Bentley & Thompson are much pleased to hear you have escaped unhurt from P[oonqua]

so great a stagnation of business, such immense losses, & so many failures as Peace has made, were never known in America before.

[Received January 17, 1803]

\* \* \*

Providence 18<sup>th</sup> May 1802

Sullivan Dorr Esq<sup>r</sup>

D<sup>r</sup> Sir,

Since writing you on the 15<sup>th</sup> Inst the old concern in the Ann & Hope Capt<sup>n</sup> Bentley have concluded to remit to you by the Resource Capt<sup>n</sup> W<sup>m</sup> F. Megee altho' an indirect conveyance via Manilla Dollars 15,624.37 Cents to take up some obligations given by me in their behalf in part payment for her Cargo the second voyage as their letter to you accompanying the money will direct; our, Munro Snow & Munro's part amounting to Dollars Two thousand two hundred thirty two & 5/100 \$2232  $\frac{5}{100}$  I will thank you to discharge out of the monies which you may receive for rent of the Factories, the balance, if any, that may then remain in your hands after paying the above, I wish you to apply as before directed. Should the rents have not come when the Resource arrives, I will be exceedingly obliged to you to advance that sum for us, so that the whole payments may be made together, & when they are received take so much to your own account as shall fully reimburse you for the advance & what interest you may deem proper to charge.

I am With Esteem

Sir,

Your humble servant

/S/ Samuel Snow

Other Owners 15624.37

Our part 2232. 5

Total Dollars 17856.42

[Received January 17, 1803]

\* \* \*

Providence May 18, 1802

Sullivan Dorr Esq<sup>r</sup>

Sir

We have this day written you in company with our mutual friends

Mess<sup>rs</sup> Munro, Snow & Munro by the Resource, & transmitted you two bills of Loading for Specie remitted to pay our proportion of sundry debts contracted in Canton by Samuel Snow Esq: in the year 1800 on account of Cargo furnished the ship Ann & Hope — our proportion of the sum remitted, as will appear by Cap<sup>t</sup> Megees bill of loading is Seven thousand, four hundred & forty dollars & seventeen cents. In case Mr. Thomas Thompson should be in Canton, when this money arrives, we will thank [you] to deliver him our part of it to be applied by him for the object for which we have already appropriated it, otherwise please dispose of it in the manner pointed out in our letter, signed also by Mess<sup>rs</sup> Munro and C<sup>o</sup> which covers the bills of Loading.<sup>18</sup>

M<sup>r</sup> Thompson has advised us of leaving in your care last season a quantity of Clarified Ginseng that we sent in the Ann & Hope which he could not dispose of — we flatter ourselves, that we shall soon hear something favorable of this article — understanding that the Common sort was rising in value at the latest date from Canton. Mr. Thompson sails with the first fair Wind for Batavia in our Ship Ann & Hope — now commanded by Cap<sup>t</sup> Laing. Should he be unable to procure a cargo there, we conclude he must go on to Canton for one but we flatter ourselves he will succeed at the first port for there is now such an immense stock of China goods & particularly Teas — that they are really not worth bringing to this country.

We remain respectfully, Sir

Your ob. Ser<sup>s</sup>

/S/ Brown & Ives

[Received January 17, 1803]

\* \* \*

Providence May 18, 1802

Sullivan Dorr Esq<sup>r</sup>

Sir

We take the liberty of enclosing to you, Cap<sup>t</sup> W<sup>m</sup> F. Megee's two bills

<sup>18</sup>Because of his immediate departure from Canton, Dorr transferred this agency to William F. Megee, Snow's partner in the ownership of the Hong factories. Sullivan Dorr to Brown & Ives, January 17, 1803, *ibid.*, p. 360.

of Loading, for Nine thousand, six hundred & seventy two dollars & twenty two cents — consigned to your care, by the Ship Resource

By Brown & Ives, 6 boxes & one bag containing	\$7440:17
By Munro, Snow & Munro, for acco <sup>t</sup> of John Innes	
Clark, two boxes & one bag cont <sup>s</sup>	2232: 5
	<hr/>
	\$9672:22

this sum together with the addition of Two Thousand, two hundred & thirty two dollars & five cents which Mess<sup>rs</sup> Munro Snow & Munro, by this letter, also enclosed, have desired you to furnish for their particular account — you will please apply to the payment of the following obligations given by Samuel Snow Esq<sup>r</sup> on behalf of Gibbs & Channing, Jn<sup>o</sup> I. Clark, Munro & c & Brown & Ives

M <sup>r</sup> Puqua, Hong Merch <sup>t</sup> dated 2 March 1800 at 20 months	\$5600:25
M <sup>r</sup> Conseequa —do —do —do	6859:
M <sup>r</sup> Poonqua, Silk Merch <sup>t</sup> 6 Mar: 1800 —do	2777:
M <sup>r</sup> Eshing 4 Mar: —do	1035:
M <sup>r</sup> Loo Mouqua 6 Mar: —do	1585:17
	<hr/>
	\$17856:42

Mess<sup>rs</sup> Gibbs & Channings prop<sup>o</sup> of these notes,  
being one third of the whole Sum or \$5952:14

we expect they will ship you by this conveyance — in which case, we will thank you to take up the several obligations, Cancel them & transmit them to us — but in case Mess<sup>rs</sup> Gibbs & Channing should not have an opportunity of putting their Money on board the Resource, you will please have the Sum we now remit together with Mess: Munro Snow & Munro's endorsed on those several obligations — mentioning from whom received.

The notes will doubtless be found in the hands of the Gent. to whom they were given — if not, they will be able we presume to inform you where they are.

We do not expect Interest will be exacted, as it was owing to a disappointment experienced by us in a ship that was to have gone from Newport last year but which the owners finally declined sending that that debt was not duly paid. This part of the demand on us will be put

right & to the satisfaction of the Gentlemen who hold the notes, by Mr Snow, when he next shall visit Canton

We remain respectfully

Your ob. ser<sup>s</sup>

/S/ Brown & Ives

/S/ Munro Snow & Munro

Copy of the above delivered  
William F. Megee Esq  
Jany 17, 1803 /S/ Thomas Lorkin  
[Received January 17, 1803]

### BOOK REVIEW

*Elias Boudinot's Journey to Boston in 1809.* Edited by Milton Halsey Thomas. Princeton, New Jersey. Princeton University Library, 1955. xiii, 97, illus.

Elias Boudinot (1740-1821), one of the Founding Fathers, having retired from public life to his home in Elizabeth Town, New Jersey, went on a pleasure trip to Boston (getting north as far as Portsmouth) from June 22 to October 2, 1809. With him went his recently widowed daughter Susan Bradley, and her delicate friend Mary Binney, whose sister had married Bradley's nephew, and who was to marry the well-known Lucius Manlius Sargent of Boston. It should also be mentioned that she was the daughter of Mrs. Barnabas Binney who made a similar trip in 1788, visiting at the home of Nicholas Brown in Providence. An interesting account of this trip is preserved in an unpublished diary kept by her companion, Miss Susan Lear.

Boudinot planned to visit various old friends (all of them distinguished), but he was particularly interested in the progress of the country he had helped to found. He kept a diary in which he noted, with gratification and sometimes astonishment, the public buildings and private mansions, the state of agriculture and industry, the sermons he attended, and everything else which caught the attention of the gouty old gentleman. As a result his diary is invaluable for shedding light on local history.

The party entered Rhode Island on July 7, and instantly the prosperity of Connecticut gave way to a general poverty. "On enquiring into this Phenomenon, we were answered, that in the Country, they have neither Churches nor Schools, and therefore the Inhabitants are not only ignorant, but careless & indolent." But within a few miles of Providence, matters improved remarkably.

We passed thro' a beautiful Street lined with handsome Houses across a long Bridge over Providence River thro' the Town going to the Tavern, but accidentally met our Friend Mr. Thomas P. Ives in the Street, who

would not admit of a denial but insisted on our driving to his House [66 Power Street], as Mrs. Ives had been looking out for us for several days.

The next day they drove through the town.

The alterations & improvements that appeared on every hand, since my former Visit, really astonished me. I could hardly believe it possible. It was then a small Town of about 500 indifferent Houses along a steep shelving Hill, giving but bare room for the two rows of Houses between the rough lofty Hill & the River. There was then but 50 or 60 Sail of Vessels belonging to the Port. I now found it a large elegant City, the 3d in point of Trade in the New England States. It has near 1200 Houses & 7000 Inhabitants — about 12000 Ton of Shipping — Three Banks — 4 Insurance Companies — a large Market House — 2 large well built Bridges connecting the City on each side of the River — 7 places of Worship, large & elegant — a large State House — a Theatre — an elegant College containing at present 90 Students — between 20 & 30 Considerable Cotton Manufactories which go by Water — together with a very large India trade.

The next day being Sunday, they went in the morning to the Baptist church and in the afternoon to the Presbyterian, "both elegant & convenient buildings with very handsome Pulpits & Steeples," but the latter had an organ, of which he disapproved.

On Monday they passed through "Patuckett" (which he describes) on their way to Dedham; then by way of Watertown and Cambridge they reached Boston, where he was agreeably surprised by the inoffensiveness of the Unitarian sermons.

Perhaps most valuable is his account of the battle of Bunker Hill, which he considered as having been, "with Trenton in New Jersey, the most important of the whole war." Judge William Tudor, with whom he visited the field, had been "present at the bloody scene," and gave him a critical summary with many details, all of which Boudinot recorded at considerable length. He makes it clear that the battle was basically one of morale. Could these raw country lads, without any basic training whatsoever, and officered by amateurs who never thought of securing a line of retreat, or even providing food and drink — could these lads possibly withstand the onslaught of the trained British soldiers? General Gage could have won the battle without firing a shot simply by cutting off the retreat and waiting until the Americans were hungry. But instead he ordered a full-scale frontal attack, which the Americans repelled twice. The British officer in command realized the mistake, regrouped the survivors in columns, and took the hill. But already the Americans had won a crucial moral victory.

The editor is to be congratulated on producing a thoroughly readable book, with full notes on all important matters and an excellent index. The illustrations are well chosen and appropriate.

S. FOSTER DAMON

Brown University



### 13. SIDE CHAIR

*Mahogany*

Newport 1745-55

Chairs of this style enjoyed widespread popularity and examples are fairly numerous today. While in general the lines and proportions are similar, a comparison of this with No. 14 shows the variations which occur. In this chair the seat is square, the front seat rail scalloped, the splat is vase-shaped, and the stiles of the back are not shaped. Note particularly the lines of the leg and pad foot. The strong resemblance to that shown on page 48 of the *Arts and Crafts of Newport, Rhode Island* (Carpenter) and to Figure 120 of *American Furniture* (Downs) demonstrates a characteristic Newport form as do the sturdy stiles and rear legs.

Ex-collection Henry A. Hoffman



#### 14. SIDE CHAIR

*Mahogany*

Newport 1745-55

We see here a more sophisticated version of the chair shown as No. 13. While the legs and stretchers are almost identical, from the seat up, the chair has four so-called "premium" features which in today's market, as was the case two hundred years ago, command a price which is at least twice as much as for the simpler design. The "balloon" shaped seat, the shaped stiles, the carved shell on the crest rail, and the design of the splat illustrate a more highly developed style, commonly employed in but not confined to Newport. These features are found in chairs made in other parts of New England, but the particular execution of these features in this case stamps this a Newport chair.

Ex-collection Henry A. Hoffman





15. SIDE CHAIR  
( ONE OF A SET OF FOUR )

*Mahogany*

Rhode Island 1765-1775

This chair was formerly owned by the John Brown who built the house in which the Rhode Island Historical Society now has its headquarters. It is a bequest of Grace (Herreshoff) Sperry, a descendant of John Brown. The so-called Chippendale ladder-back or ribbon-back chairs were not generally made in Rhode Island to the extent that they were in Philadelphia and New York. A Rhode Island attribution is supported by the sturdy, just short of clumsy, proportions of legs, stretchers, and back. The skill of the craftsman who made this chair resulted in a pleasing design based on the utmost simplicity of line.



## 16. CHEST OF DRAWERS

*Mahogany*

Massachusetts

1760-1780

Unadorned block-front chests of drawers of this style were made in both Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The design in each locality is so similar that in the absence of documentary evidence one must rely on certain assumptions which relate primarily to the interior construction of the drawers. Newport is indicated if the wood is chestnut and poplar and the sides of the drawers thinner than usual. If the wood is pine and the sides a normal thickness with a pair of reeds on top of the sides, then the leaning is usually toward Massachusetts. Here the bracket foot is similar to the one in *American Furniture* (Downs) Figure 168.

Ex-collection Henry A. Hoffman

# THE RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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*March 1, 1956 — June 30, 1956*

- |                              |                                |
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| Pawtucket, R. I.             | Mr. Joseph Janas               |
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