



# Olmsted 200

Two Centuries and More History of Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township –  
First Farmed in 1814 and Settled in 1815

Issue 113

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## Brookers Care for Former Barnum House

Olmsted's early settlers are long gone, but the legacies of many of them endure in the homes they built that now are in the care of current residents. One of those homes is at 25334 Water Street. Originally, it was the home of John and Eunice Barnum. For most of the past two decades, it has been the home of Wendell and Sandra Brooker.

It's not clear exactly when the house was built, but it could have been as early as 1820, when the Barnums acquired a piece of land where the Village Green, part of David Fortier River Park and part of the property of the Olmsted Community Church now are located. That was just five years after James Geer and his family became the first settlers of European descent to move into the township that later was named Olmsted.



*The house at 25334 Water Street was built to be home for John and Eunice Barnum in the early 1800s. Recently, it has been the home of Wendell and Sandra Brooker.*

John Barnum, who was born on August 11, 1802, in Vergennes, Vermont, came to Ohio with his parents, John and Sally, and three brothers in 1811 or 1812. They settled in the Lorain County community of Florence but later moved to Ridgeville (now North Ridgeville).

After he grew up, the young John Barnum ended up in Olmsted when he associated with Lemuel Hoadley and married his daughter, Eunice. Hoadley built water-

powered mills for sawing lumber or grinding grain wherever he settled in northeastern Ohio. He helped his brother Calvin build the mill along Rocky River at the northern edge of Columbia Township where Gibbs Butcher Block now stands. Lemuel Hoadley also built a mill at Cedar Point, where the east and west branches of Rocky River meet in what now is the Rocky River Reservation of the Cleveland Metroparks.



*On the left, the diagonal groove on the side of Inscription Rock might have helped Lemuel Hoadley and John Barnum secure planks for the dam for their mill on Plum Creek. On the right is part of the sluce carved into the rock on the opposite side of the creek.*

Together, Lemuel Hoadley and John Barnum built another mill near the mouth of Plum Creek. The sluce they carved in the rock to divert the water there can still be seen, although it often gets filled with leaves, dirt and other debris.

Also, a straight, diagonal cut across Inscription Rock next to the creek could be where they anchored their dam for the mill. At least that's the conjecture of local historian Bruce Banks (who was subject of a story in Issue 112 of *Olmsted 200*), who thinks the cut is so straight that it must have been manmade.

Hoadley built his home nearby at what now is the southeastern corner of Water Street and Main Street. That house still stands, although it has been greatly expanded over the years. In the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was known as the home of Dr. William Mahoney, who served as a councilman and mayor of Olmsted Falls.



*This house at 7707 Main Street is much bigger than it was when Lemuel Hoadley built the original section as his home in early 1800s.*

Barnum built his home a short walk from Hoadley's house at what now is the northwestern corner of Water Street and Main Street. He acquired the land in what was Tract 5 of the township from Eliphalet Williams, who had bought it as part of a much larger piece of land in 1814. Williams was from North Hampton, Massachusetts. The section of land he bought was the part of the township originally bought from the Connecticut Land Company by Daniel Phoenix. Although Aaron Olmsted had bid for the largest portion of the township land in 1795, Phoenix had bid for the second-largest portion. In 1807, Olmsted's portion was worth \$12,903.23, while Phoenix's was worth \$2,952.68. After Phoenix died, his land went in 1812 to his son, who sold it to Williams.

In 1830, Barnum donated some of his land to serve as the site of a wooden-frame schoolhouse, which was the first in the community. In 1874, the wooden schoolhouse was replaced by a two-story brick building, the Union Schoolhouse, which served as a school for four decades and stood until 1960. The land Barnum donated became the Village Green.

John Barnum lived 47 years. He died on December 25, 1849, more than five years before Olmsted Falls incorporated as a village in 1856. Eunice Barnum lived 61 years from October 21, 1803, to December 15, 1864. Both were buried at Butternut Ridge Cemetery.

John and Eunice Barnum had two sons and a daughter. The most significant of them in Olmsted history was Luther Barnum, who started a sandstone quarry in what now is David Fortier River Park. He was born in 1829 and died in 1888. He lived in his parents' house after their deaths. He also served as a councilman and mayor of Olmsted



Falls. (For more on Luther Barnum and his quarry, see Issue 80 of *Olmsted 200* from January 2020.)

The Water Street house changed hands several times after leaving the ownership of the Barnums. It has been in the hands of Wendell and Sandra Brooker since 2004. Before then, they had lived in a house that was about 75 years old near the border between Brook Park and Berea and close to the Metroparks. They moved because Cleveland Hopkins International Airport wanted to tear down their house to build a new runway.

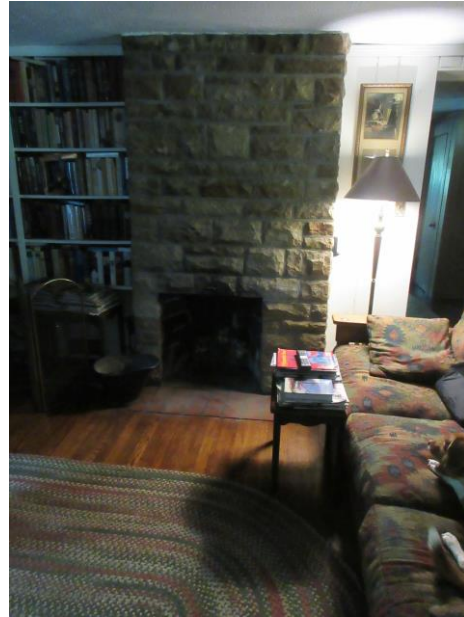
*Wendell and Sandra Brooker stand in front of their house at 25334 Water Street.*

One reason they were attracted to the former Barnum house was its many built-in bookcases because they own many books. Wendell Brooker, who has a doctorate in philosophy, served as a United Church of Christ minister for 40 years. He also has worked part-time as a professor at Cuyahoga Community College for about two decades. He said he doesn't use the title "Reverend" since he retired from the ministry, and he uses the title "Doctor" only at the college. Sandra Brooker had a career as a social worker. She worked until two years after her husband retired from the ministry.

Wendell was born in 1945 in Paducah, Kentucky. His mother, who grew up there, met his father, who grew up in Maine, when he was stationed at Paducah before going off to serve in the military during World War II. After the war, the family moved to Rochester, New York, where Wendell grew up. Sandra grew up in a little town about 30 miles southwest of Rochester. They met while they worked at a mental hospital for children – he as a teacher and she as a social worker. They married 50 years ago. After living in Milwaukee for four years, they moved to the Cleveland area in 1977.

Their Olmsted Falls house's lot now includes less than half an acre out of the large piece of land John Barnum bought in 1820. But the Brookers can still see signs of what Barnum built back then and what his son, Luther, added onto the eastern side of the house in the 1880s. The Brookers learned a bit more about the house about four years ago, when they did their own renovations, which included having a neighbor redo the ceiling in their living room.

"When he took the ceiling out, we found out that this had originally been two rooms," Wendell said while conducting a tour for *Olmsted 200*. "You can see the divider right here. It's more clear when you have the ceiling out."



Their family room was an original part of the house, so the Brookers believe it might have been the Barnums' living room. Their dining room also seems to have been part of the original house. It includes a very old, west-facing window with someone's name apparently etched into the glass.

*The family room includes one of two fireplaces in the house, as well several built-in bookshelves, which helped attract the Brookers to the house.*



*It's hard to capture in a photo, but one pane in this window contains letters that were etched into it.*

"Supposedly, it's someone in the Barnum family," Wendell said. "You can see the B there. Whenever we have work done on the house, we tell people to be careful because it's already cracked. The window is already cracked, as you can see."

The Brookers believe the oldest part of their kitchen might date back to the 1880s.

"This used to be a back porch on the other side of this, and the mud room used to be a back porch together," Wendell said while leading the tour of the house. "I think the back porch was converted into the kitchen and the mud room in the 1980s."

Sandra Brooker said the Merrimans, the family who owned the house before they acquired it, made those changes.

"We feed the birds back here, so we can watch the birds," Wendell said as he looked out the back door. "Basically, the gardens were here. The Merrimans set the garden up, so we just try to keep it alive."

Turning around, he pointed to the back of the fireplace that opens into the living room.



“I believe this is the newer of the two fireplaces,” Wendell said. “I think this would have been built sometime between 1880 and 1920.”

Before the Brookers moved in, they noticed the Merrimans had a plaque on the wall and a picture showing the house when it served as the Romany Inn early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps in the 1920s.

“It was gone when we moved in,” Sandra said about the plaque. “And we looked at [the picture] down at the historical society.”

That was the Western Reserve Historical Society at University Circle, where the Brookers researched the history of the house and found a story about it in an old newspaper, which might have been the *Berea Enterprise*. Wendell said the Romany Inn was operated by the Cleveland Metropolitan Park District, which was in its infancy back then. He jokingly said he was tempted to steal that newspaper story, which included the picture of the house as the Romany Inn.



*The house no longer has a plaque showing what it looked like as the Romany Inn, but it does have this one about its listing as a historic place.*



*Near the house is this stepping stone of the type used for getting in and out of carriages.*

The garage wouldn't have been here.”

“It talked about people taking walks – hikes – and this was a place for them to stop and eat,” Wendell said. “And I’m guessing that living room might have been the dining room. I think it was here 10 years. It might have been 20.”

Going outside, he pointed out “one of those stepping-stone things,” referring to one of the stones that were common in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to help people get in and out of carriages.

“I figure that was put in when this was an inn,” Wendell said. “The garage was only built in the 1980s.



*This is one of two black walnut trees on the property.*

The Brookers’ yard includes two old black walnut trees, one just east of the house and the other behind the garage. “I’m guessing it’s over a hundred feet high, Wendell said about the tree near the house. “I worry about it every time it rains. I did have it checked out probably about eight or nine or 10 years ago, and they said it was strong.”

Going into the basement, he led the tour through the oldest portion first.

“This will be the original basement to the room were we in upstairs – the family room, where the bathroom is,” Wendell said.

In the back of the basement are signs of a former entranceway. “We had that redone in the back because the animals used to get under there,” Wendell said. “It’s a constant struggle here keeping the animals outside. They get in, too. There are several traps I use from time to time.”

Many of those animals were squirrels, but he has lost count of how many there were.

Moving from the original part of the basement, Wendell pointed out where he believes a room was added in the 1880s expansion. “But I don’t know that,” he said. “It’s completely different, so it must have been done at a different time. It’s on a different level.”

Then, Wendell pointed out a feature he considered very interesting. “This is the space under the living room,” he said. “That part of the house actually sits on what’s called a packed earth foundation. There’s no stone foundation. I didn’t know there was such a thing before we moved in here. We were going to have some of this cleaned out and new stuff put on around the walls and so forth, and they told us they couldn’t touch it because that’s the foundation.”



*This is old crossbeam in the basement still has bark on it.*



*The enclosed front porch with its antiques is a pleasant spot when the weather is warm.*

The view from the basement also showed that the beams supporting the first floor are similar to those in other 19<sup>th</sup> century Olmsted houses. “They still have the bark on the wood, which to me is incredible,” he said. “These crossbeams – I think there are six of these altogether. These are actually six by six. I measured them. Now, you get a two-by-four that’s really one-and-a-half by three-and-a-half. But those are actually six-by-sixes.”

From the basement, the tour headed to the enclosed front porch. “This is a very nice porch,” Wendell said. “Sometimes, we eat out here.”

The porch has screens for when the weather is warm and pleasant. Wendell made the storm windows they use when the weather isn’t pleasant.

“I made those by hand because everything has to be sized just so,” he said. “There’s nothing classy about them, but they had to be sized just so. What came with the house was all smashed. I don’t know how it happened.”

Even though he made new storm windows for the porch, storm hooks are still attached on the outside. “They used to hang a great big board contraption in front of the windows to keep the weather out,” Wendell said. “The old hooks are still there. I don’t know how long it’s been since they actually did that.”

In 2017, the Brookers had about one-third of the house’s siding replaced using the same type of wood as in the original siding, but they had to order it from California. In 2018, they had the house painted.

On the second floor, the house has four bedrooms – two in the front and two in the back – although the Brookers use one as an office. The two on the west side of the house above the family room are part of the original house, and the other two were part of the 1880s expansion. Wendell believes the roof was raised during that 1880s expansion because he can see where the roof was more slanted.



*This is one of the second-floor bedrooms.*

“These closets are amazing,” he said. “A lot of these old houses don’t have very big closets.”



*This fan prevents the attic from getting too hot.*

Looking up toward the raised ceiling in the hallway, Wendell pointed out another feature he found interesting – a fan. “That airs out the attic when it gets too hot,” he said. “It also draws the air conditioning up from downstairs. I don’t know how old it is, but it’s pretty old, and it still works. We thought that was a great thing – and it works.”

If John and Eunice Barnum could see their house now, they might be surprised by some of the changes in it, but they wouldn’t likely feel too much out of place because the Brookers have filled the house with antiques belonging to the period between 1840 and 1880.

“We had lots of fun with that when we first moved in,” Wendell said.

Houses like the one at 25334 Water Street help Olmsted Falls to show off its two centuries of history. Owners like the Brookers ensure those houses can keep doing so in the years to come.



## Kucklick of Olmsted Became Prolific Patent-Holder

Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township have had many inventive residents who have earned patents for their creations. Some of them got their names on just one or two patents each, but others – including Theodore TeGrotenhuis and Bruce Banks, whose stories were featured in Issues 111 and 112 of *Olmsted 200* – were able to earn dozens of patents each.

However, one man who has been even more prolific in achieving patents is former Olmsted Falls resident Ted Kucklick, who has done his work in California.



*This photo shows Ted Kucklick as a young inventor with a young family.*

“At last count I think I am on 111 patents, 110 utility patents and 1 design patent, for a range of medtech devices,” he wrote recently in an email.

Back when he was growing up in the 1950s, ‘60s and ‘70s, the Kucklick name was quite prominent in Olmsted Falls. His father, Bill, operated Kucklick’s Village Square Shoppe, a furniture store in the Depositors Building along Columbia Road just south of the railroad tracks. He followed in the footsteps of his father, Frederick “Fritz” Kucklick, as a downtown Olmsted Falls merchant. It was Bill Kucklick who sold the Depositors Building and two acres around it to Clint Williams in late 1989 for what became the first phase of Grand Pacific Junction, beginning the following year.



*This is how Kucklick’s Village Square Shoppe looked in 1964.*

Ted Kucklick wrote. “At one time I thought I wanted to design airplanes (because my dad was an avid pilot and EAA [Experimental Aircraft Association] member and built his own airplane) but my math skills just were not there for that kind of thing, though I did some airplane designs when I was a kid.”

After high school, he attended the Cleveland Institute of Art. Originally, he wanted to study illustration. He then discovered industrial design, which was designing products.

“It’s what I had wanted to do all along but did not know there was a name for it,” Kucklick said.

“I have always liked art and science and have always been interested in technology,”

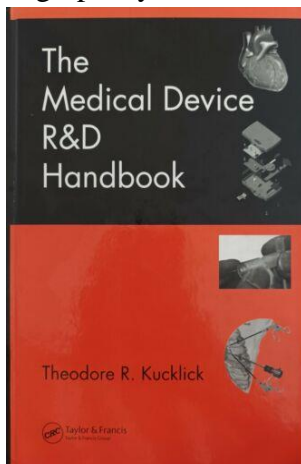


After he graduated from the Cleveland Institute of Art, he moved initially to San Diego until he received a job offer in San Jose, the center of Silicon Valley.

“While on my first job, I was offered a freelance job doing medical illustration of heart catheters for a company called ACS, later Guidant, now Boston Scientific,” Kucklick wrote. “They were pioneering a new technology at the time, balloon angioplasty. I had never done medical illustration before but figured I could learn. This exposed me to medical device design, something again, that I did not know that I would like, but it turned out to be the most interesting thing of all. It seemed a perfect blend of design, art and science.”

Then, Kucklick got another another job working for RITA Medical, a medical-technical startup company that was developing a treatment for liver cancer. He said the company’s founder, Stuart Edwards, was “a serial entrepreneur and prolific inventor,” who helped Kucklick learn much more about inventing and patenting. Edwards got his name on more than 400 patents and started at least six successful medtech companies, five of which he took public. “He was a bundle of energy (and also a certifiable crazy person),” Kucklick wrote.

After his work with Edwards, he had the opportunity to work with two companies that spun out of Fogarty Engineering, which was the incubator laboratory of Dr. Tom Fogarty, who was originally from Cincinnati. Fogarty was a pioneer in developing vascular devices, such as the Fogarty Catheter, balloon angioplasty, and the tissue heart valve. He has been inducted into the Inventors Hall of



*The second edition of Kucklick’s book came out in 2013.*

mentors and experiences.”



*After honing his skills at other companies, Ted Kucklick founded Cannuflow.*

Fame in Akron. Fogarty also received the Lemelson Prize from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Presidential Medal of Technology and Innovation. With Fogarty, Kucklick worked on a sleep apnea device and a vessel-sealing technology.

“After this I started my company, Cannuflow, that develops access cannula and fluid devices for orthopedic surgery,” he wrote. (More on Cannuflow, founded in 2002, is available at: <https://www.cannuflow.com/>.)

Kucklick also became the author of *The Medical Device R&D Handbook* for CRC Press, which for a short time was the top-selling biotechnology title on Amazon. “The book explains some of the things I learned from working at a string of medical device startup companies,” he said. “When people ask, ‘Where did you learn this stuff?’ I tell them ‘art school’ and a few great

Although, by his count, Kucklick has his name on 111 patents, he's not finished inventing.

"The latest project I am working on is an implantable brain stimulator for treating drug-resistant depression, for a startup, Inner Cosmos," he wrote.

Kucklick isn't the first inventor in his family. While searching patent records, he found one awarded in 1952 to his grandfather, Fritz, for a fishing lure.

"My grandfather was always tinkering with things like his ham radio, and I think he would have liked to have been an inventor himself," Kucklick wrote. "He was certainly an entrepreneur with an independent streak. My cousin, Fredrick C. 'Fritz' Kucklick, is on some patents as well, so I guess we caught the bug from Grandpa Fritz."

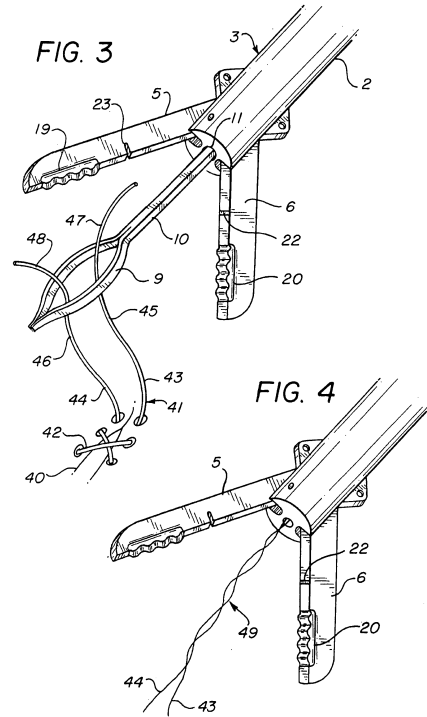
Further, he wrote, his daughter Ruth (Kucklick) Prentice, returned to Ohio from California to play volleyball at Walsh University in North Canton, Canton, and later went to Cleveland Institute of Art for product design, too. "Now, she is on 11 patents for her work on baby products and kitchen appliances, so it runs in the family a bit."

Judging by the stories of inventors in the past several issues, it seems to run in many families with Olmsted connections.

## Peltz Drug Bottle Turns Up Far from Home

Joseph Peltz was a longtime druggist in Olmsted Falls in the late 1800s and early 1900s before he moved far away – California. Recently, a bottle he dispensed more than a century ago turned up far from Olmsted – in Georgia.

Susan (Fedirko) Manning, who grew up at 8315 Columbia Road and graduated from Olmsted Falls High School in 1972, now lives in Savannah. She believes her mother, Connie (Seed) Fedirko, acquired the bottle when Simmerer and Sons' Hardware went out of business in 1971 in the building now known as the Grand Pacific Hotel.



*This Suture Welding Device, invented by Kucklick and one other person, received a July, 21, 2005, patent. It was assigned to Starion Instruments Corporation.*



*Susan Manning shared a Peltz drug bottle her mother saved.*



*On the left is the Peltz drug bottle from Susan Manning. On the right is the Simmerer & Sons Hardware thermometer she gave to a friend.*

“Apparently when Simmerers closed, Mom was able to purchase a few mementos from the back building around the corner,” Manning wrote. “This is where and when she acquired the Peltz medicine bottle. One Christmas she gifted me the store’s thermometer, which I used to check during particularly harsh weather conditions. I’d hoped it would elicit enough sympathy from my parents to let me have a car. It never worked. About ten years ago my best friend’s daughter held her wedding reception at the now Grand Pacific Junction. I gifted the Simmerers thermometer to her on her anniversary.”

After Joseph Peltz sold drugs and sundries on the east side of Columbia Street (now Columbia Road) for many years, he then partnered with his brother-in-law, Philip Simmerer, and expanded into hardware supplies when they took over the former hotel building in 1893. But in 1912, Peltz separated from Simmerer. He left the hardware business to his brother-in-law and resumed his drugstore business across the street until he moved to California in 1920. Thus, any drug bottle with Peltz’s name on it is more than 100 years old, although it could be a few decades older than that.

Someone who is very excited that a Peltz drug bottle has been preserved is Doug Peltz, Joseph’s great-great-grandson.

“This is SO cool,” he wrote after he learned about it. “It totally made my day to see this. I instantly shared it with my family as well, and they were blown away!”

Doug Peltz, a former San Francisco resident who now lives in Austin, Texas, has been researching the history of his ancestors – both Peltz and Simmerer – for many years, and he plans to continue with a trip to Europe next summer.

By the way, the Peltz bottle that Susan Manning shared is not the first one to show up in Georgia. In 2016, Sue Simmerer, the widow of Philip E. Simmerer (the grandson of the older Philip Simmerer), visited her son’s Atlanta home, where she found a drug bottle with a label that said, “Peltz & Simmerer.” A photo of that bottle can be seen in Issue 43 of *Olmsted 200* from December 2016.

## **Still to Come**

The next issue of *Olmsted 200* will include another story about an Olmsted inventor and more about the history of Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township.



If you know of other people who would like to receive *Olmsted 200* by email, please feel free to forward it to them. They can get on the distribution list by sending a request to: [wallacestar@hotmail.com](mailto:wallacestar@hotmail.com). *Olmsted 200* has readers in several states beyond Ohio, including Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin, and as well as overseas in the Netherlands, Germany and Japan.

Your questions and comments about *Olmsted 200* are welcome. Perhaps there is something about Olmsted's history that you would like to have pulled out of *Olmsted 200*'s extensive archives. Or perhaps you have information or photos about the community's history that you would like to share.

If you have missed any of the past issues of *Olmsted 200* or want to share them with someone else, all of them can be found on Olmsted Township's website. Go to <http://olmstedtownship.org/newsletters/>. A list of *Olmsted 200* issues is on the right side. Click on the number of the issue you want to read. All of the issues of *Olmsted 200* also are available on the website of the City of Olmsted Falls. Find them at: [http://www.olmstedfalls.org/olmsted\\_falls\\_history/index.php](http://www.olmstedfalls.org/olmsted_falls_history/index.php). A link to *Olmsted 200* can be found on the left side of the page.

Except where otherwise noted, all articles in *Olmsted 200* are written by Jim Wallace. Thanks go to Mary Louise King for help in proofreading and editing many issues. Thanks also go to David Kennedy for frequently contributing research and insight for some stories. Written contributions and photos, as well as comments and questions about items in this newsletter, will be considered for publication. Send any correspondence by email to: [wallacestar@hotmail.com](mailto:wallacestar@hotmail.com).

*Olmsted 200* is written, researched and edited by Jim Wallace, who is solely responsible for its content. He is co-author (with Bruce Banks) of *The Olmsted Story: A Brief History of Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township*, published in 2010 by The History Press of Charleston, S.C. *The Olmsted Story* is available at Angelina's Pizza in Olmsted Falls and the Berea Historical Society's Mahler Museum & History Center and through online booksellers.

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