Guide to the Papers of William Barton Rogers
MC.0001
1804-1950
Finding aid prepared by Karen T. Lynch

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April 23, 2009
Describing Archives: A Content Standard
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Summary Information

Repository: Institute Archives and Special Collections

Creator: Rogers, William Barton, 1804-1882

Title: William Barton Rogers papers

Date [bulk]: Bulk, 1834-1882

Date [inclusive]: 1804-1950

Extent: 5.0 cubic feet (14 manuscript boxes, 1 flat box, 1 oversize enclosure)

Language: English

Abstract: This collection contains the personal correspondence of William Barton Rogers, the founder of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Family and professional correspondence, notes, articles, lectures, clippings, and drafts of articles on scientific topics, documents relating his philosophy on science and technology education, and many antecedent documents relating to the establishment and early years of MIT are included. An important part of the collection is drafts of documents prepared during Rogers's efforts to establish a new kind of scientific Institute and to organize the Massachusetts Institute of Technology which was formally incorporated on April 10, 1861, in Boston, Massachusetts. Later documents relate to the development of the educational curriculum, finances, faculty, and facilities of the Institute. There are also papers relating to Rogers' term as president of the National Academy of Sciences, and his involvement with the American Social Science Association and the American Association of Geologists and Naturalists (later the American Association for the Advancement of Science).
Citation

William Barton Rogers papers, MC 1, box X. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Institute Archives and Special Collections, Cambridge, Massachusetts
# Historical note

#### Founding of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1846 March 13</td>
<td>William B. Rogers in a letter to his brother outlines a &quot;Plan for a Polytechnic School in Boston.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859 March 30</td>
<td>A memorial is written by Dr. Samuel Kneeland petitioning the 1859 Massachusetts legislature for a grant of land for a Conservatory of Art and Science. Issued as House document no. 260, it is not approved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859 summer</td>
<td>William B. Rogers on behalf of a committee representing various associations prepares a memorial for the 1860 Massachusetts legislature setting forth a plan for an Institute of Technology. It is issued as House document no. 13, but is not approved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860 summer</td>
<td>William B. Rogers is asked again to prepare a plan, resulting in the document &lt;title render=&quot;italic&quot;&gt;Objects and Plan of an Institute of Technology&lt;/title&gt;. Objects and Plan is accepted by the Committee of Associated Institutions, read at a meeting of the Boston Board of Trade, and submitted to the Massachusetts legislature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861 January 7</td>
<td>Circular letter announces a meeting for the purpose of organizing the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861 January 11</td>
<td>Per circular letter and led by William Barton Rogers, a meeting of persons interested in establishing an Institute of Technology is held in Boston. An &quot;Act of Association&quot; is adopted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1861 March 19    | Report of the Joint Standing Committee on Education of the Massachusetts legislature on the 
Memorial of the Associated Institutions is issued as House document 171. William B. Rogers prepared the report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1861 April 10</td>
<td>The Massachusetts legislature passes and Governor John Andrew signs &quot;An Act to Incorporate the Massachusetts Institute of Technology&quot; (Acts 1861, chapter 183).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861 April 12</td>
<td>Civil War begins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td><em>&lt;title render=&quot;italic&quot;&gt;An Account of the Proceedings Preliminary to the Organization of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology&lt;/title&gt;</em> is published.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862 April 8</td>
<td>An initial meeting is held to accept the charter, adopt bylaws, and choose officers to serve until the Government of the Institute is formally elected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862 December 17</td>
<td>First public meeting of the Society of Arts, one of three branches of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology proposed in the charter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864 May 30</td>
<td><em>&lt;title render=&quot;italic&quot;&gt;Scope and Plan of the School of Industrial Science of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology&lt;/title&gt;</em> is adopted by the Corporation as the foundation of the Institute's educational philosophy, and the document is published.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862 May 6</td>
<td>The Government (later known as the Corporation) of MIT is formally elected at the first Annual Meeting of the 54 incorporators. William Barton Rogers is elected president.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865 February 20</td>
<td>First course of instruction begins with fifteen students. Classes are held at the Mercantile Building, Summer Street, Boston.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>First class of students graduates.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Biography**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1802</td>
<td>February 11: James Blythe Rogers (brother) is born.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1804</td>
<td>December 7: William Barton Rogers is born.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1808</td>
<td>August 1: Henry Darwin Rogers (brother) is born.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1812</td>
<td>The Rogers family moves to Baltimore, Maryland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1813</td>
<td>March 29: Robert Empie Rogers (brother) is born.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1819</td>
<td>Patrick Kerr Rogers (father) is appointed professor of natural history and chemistry at the College of William and Mary, and the family moves to Williamsburg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1819-1824</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers attends the College of William and Mary. It is unclear whether he ever actually graduated from the college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>Hannah Blythe Rogers (mother) dies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822</td>
<td>James Blythe Rogers receives the MD degree from the University of Maryland and begins practicing medicine in Pennsylvania.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers and Henry Darwin Rogers move to Baltimore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers and Henry Darwin Rogers open a school in Windsor, Maryland. Their brother Robert is among their pupils.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1827</td>
<td>James Blythe Rogers becomes professor of chemistry at Washington Medical College, Baltimore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1827</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers gives a course of lectures at the Maryland Institute in Baltimore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1828</td>
<td>Patrick Kerr Rogers dies. William Barton Rogers is chosen to fill his father's position as professor of natural philosophy and chemistry at the College of William and Mary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>James Blythe Rogers marries Rachel Smith of Baltimore.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1830  William Barton Rogers assumes teaching duties in mathematics in addition to his other duties at the College of William and Mary.

1830  Henry Darwin Rogers becomes professor of chemistry and natural philosophy at Dickinson College in Pennsylvania. While at Dickinson, he also edits a periodical entitled "The Messenger of Useful Knowledge."

1832-1833  Henry Darwin Rogers spends the winter in London, where he becomes acquainted with members of the Geological Society of London and other scientists. His impressions of the development of science in Europe are communicated in letters to his brothers.

1833  William Barton Rogers is elected a correspondent of the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia.

1833 December 17  William Barton Rogers II is born (nephew of William Barton Rogers, son of James Blythe Rogers).

circa 1833-1835  Henry Darwin Rogers lectures on geology for the Franklin Institute, Philadelphia.

1834  William Barton Rogers writes his first important scientific publications, the results of his observations of Virginia's greensand and marl.

1835  William Barton Rogers is chosen as a member of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.

1835  William Barton Rogers is elected a member of the Virginia Historical and Philosophical Society of Richmond.

1835  William Barton Rogers is appointed to the chair of natural philosophy at the University of Virginia and moves to Charlottesville. Most summers are spent in fieldwork for the geological surveys.

1835-1839  James Blythe Rogers is professor of chemistry in the Medical Department of the University of Cincinnati.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1835-1840</td>
<td>Henry Darwin Rogers leads the New Jersey Geological Survey and publishes a report and a map of the state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835-1846</td>
<td>Henry Darwin Rogers is professor of geology and mineralogy at the University of Pennsylvania.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835-1848</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers serves as state geologist of Virginia. He is assisted in fieldwork by his brothers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1836</td>
<td>Robert Empie Rogers graduates from the Medical Department of the University of Pennsylvania.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1836-1856</td>
<td>Henry Darwin Rogers is head of the Pennsylvania Geological Survey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers, Henry Darwin Rogers, and Robert Empie Rogers participate in founding the Association of American Geologists and Naturalists, the parent organization of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>James Blythe Rogers moves to Philadelphia, where he assists William Barton Rogers in field and lab work and lectures on medicine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>James Blythe Rogers is appointed professor of chemistry at the Medical Institute of Philadelphia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers and Henry Darwin Rogers present a paper on their theory of the structure of the Appalachian Mountain chain before the third annual meeting of the Association of American Geologists and Naturalists in Boston.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers and Henry Darwin Rogers are elected honorary members of the Boston Society of Natural History.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>Robert Empie Rogers becomes professor of applied chemistry and materia medica at the University of Virginia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>Robert Empie Rogers marries Fanny Montgomery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1844</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers and Henry Darwin Rogers are elected foreign members of the Geological Society of London.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1844</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers is elected a member of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries, Copenhagen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1844-1845</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers serves as chairman of the faculty of the University of Virginia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1844-1847</td>
<td>James Blythe Rogers is professor of chemistry at the Franklin Institute.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers is elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>In response to Henry Darwin Rogers's request, William Barton Rogers writes A Plan for a Polytechnic School in Boston, a plan the brothers hoped would be funded by the Lowell Institute. The terms of the Lowell will did not allow the plan to be funded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>Robert Empie Rogers publishes a textbook on chemistry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>James Blythe Rogers becomes professor of chemistry at the University of Pennsylvania.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers receives an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Hampden-Sidney College in Virginia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>James Rogers, uncle of the Rogers brothers, dies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers marries Emma Savage of Boston, and the couple take a honeymoon trip to England, Scotland, and Switzerland, then return to Charlottesville in October.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers II (nephew) enters the University of Virginia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>James Blythe Rogers dies in Philadelphia. His position as professor of chemistry at the University of Pennsylvania is filled by Robert Empie Rogers. William Barton Rogers II returns to Philadelphia; he never resumes his study at the University of Virginia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers resigns his professorship at the University of Virginia and moves to Boston, where he delivers several courses of public lectures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>Henry Darwin Rogers marries Eliza Lincoln, a half-sister of Emma Savage Rogers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>Robert Empie Rogers is elected dean of the medical faculty at the University of Pennsylvania.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>Henry Darwin Rogers is awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws degree by the University of Dublin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers travels to Great Britain for his health and attends a meeting of the British Association in Dublin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>Henry Darwin Rogers becomes Regius Professor of Natural History at the University of Glasgow, Scotland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers receives an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from the College of William and Mary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers is appointed state inspector of gas meters and gas for the state of Massachusetts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861 April 10</td>
<td>The &quot;Act to Incorporate the Massachusetts Institute of Technology&quot; is passed by the legislature and approved by Governor Andrew.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862 May 6</td>
<td>At the first Annual Meeting of the Government of the Institute, William Barton Rogers is elected president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862 December</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers II is appointed treasurer of the Saving Fund Society of Philadelphia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862-1863</td>
<td>Robert Empie Rogers serves as acting assistant surgeon at West Philadelphia Military Hospital.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers attends the organizational meeting of the National Academy of Sciences. Although he was a charter member of the Academy, he was dropped for lack of attendance and later reinstated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863-1869</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers serves as corresponding secretary of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>Robert Empie Rogers and others found the Humboldt Oil Company, which fails in 1873.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers resigns his office as state inspector of gas meters and gas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864-1866</td>
<td>Henry Darwin Rogers serves as president of the Philosophical Society of Glasgow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers is elected first president of the newly-organized American Social Science Association.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>Robert Empie Rogers marries Delia Saunders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>Henry Darwin Rogers dies in Scotland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>Harvard University confers an honorary Doctor of Laws degree on William Barton Rogers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers is appointed commissioner to represent Massachusetts at the Universal Exposition at Paris.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>Due to ill health, William Barton Rogers retires from teaching physics at MIT. Professor John Daniel Runkle is appointed as acting president to serve until William Barton Rogers is well enough to resume his administrative duties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>The Rogers Laboratory of Physics is established by E. C. Pickering and named in honor of William Barton Rogers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>The first proposals of a union of MIT and Harvard are made. William Barton Rogers was consistently opposed to the proposed union.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870 May 17</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers resigns the presidency of MIT because of his poor health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870 September</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers II becomes a member of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870 October 3</td>
<td>John D. Runkle becomes second president of MIT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year(s)</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872-1875</td>
<td>Robert Empie Rogers does research aimed at improving metal refining techniques in the US Mint.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>James Savage, William Barton Rogers's father-in-law, dies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875-1879</td>
<td>Robert Empie Rogers serves as president of the Franklin Institute.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers is elected president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>Robert Empie Rogers becomes professor of medical chemistry and toxicology at Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878 June 12</td>
<td>John D. Runkle resigns as MIT president</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878 February</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers II is appointed vice president of the Saving Fund of Philadelphia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878-1887</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers II is a member of the Board of Directors of the Mercantile Library Company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879-1882</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers serves as president of the National Academy of Sciences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879 December 10</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers begins a second term as MIT president</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>The American Association for the Advancement of Science meets in Boston, and William Barton Rogers serves as host chairman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers II is chosen a member of the American Philosophical Society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881 May</td>
<td>Francis Amasa Walker is formally elected to succeed William Barton Rogers as president of MIT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881 November 10</td>
<td>Francis A. Walker takes office as president of MIT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882 May 30</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers dies in Boston.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882 October</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers II is elected one of the Board of Managers of the Saving Fund Society of Philadelphia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>Robert Empie Rogers receives an honorary Doctor of Law degree from Dickinson College in Pennsylvania.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>The original building of the Institute is renamed the Rogers Building in honor of William Barton Rogers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>The highest mountain in Virginia is named Mt. Rogers in honor of William Barton Rogers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>Robert Empie Rogers dies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers II becomes a member of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893 January</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers II is elected one of the Board of Trustees of the Building Fund of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, and secretary of the Board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893 March 15</td>
<td>William Barton Rogers II dies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td><em>Life and Letters of William Barton Rogers</em>, edited by Emma Savage Rogers with the assistance of William Thompson Sedgwick, is published.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Emma Savage Rogers dies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

William Barton Rogers was one of four sons of Patrick Kerr Rogers and Hannah Blythe Rogers. The eldest of his brothers, James Blythe Rogers, was trained as a physician, but spent most of his life as a professor of chemistry. Henry Darwin Rogers made his primary scientific contributions in the field of geology, and the youngest brother, Robert Empie Rogers, was a professor of chemistry and physician. Throughout their lives, the four brothers worked in close conjunction in their scientific endeavors, with the result that a description of one brother’s achievements is incomplete without some account of the others’ activities.

Best known as founder and first president of MIT, William Barton Rogers began his career as professor of natural philosophy and chemistry at the College of William and Mary and later taught natural philosophy at the University of Virginia. He also served as state geologist of Virginia and led the first Geological Survey of the state. At about the same time, Henry Darwin Rogers was state geologist of New Jersey and state geologist of Pennsylvania. Although William Rogers taught many facets of natural philosophy and chemistry, he made significant contributions in geology, and his articles were often co-authored by his brother Henry. In 1849, William Rogers married Emma Savage of Boston, and in 1853 the couple moved to Boston. Supported by the scientific community of Boston, Rogers brought to life his conception of a dual theoretical and technical scientific education, and largely through his efforts, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology was incorporated in 1861. William Barton Rogers served as President of MIT from the first meeting of the incorporators in 1862 until 1870, then served a second term as president from 1879 until 1881. He died in 1882 and is buried in the James Savage plot in Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
The youngest of the Rogers family members represented in this collection of papers is William Barton Rogers II, who was a son of James Blythe Rogers and was named in honor of his uncle. William B. Rogers II, was exposed early to the scientific activities of his father and uncles, who encouraged him to seek a career in science. Although he maintained an amateur interest in science, William B. Rogers II, turned to a career in banking and served the Western Savings Fund Society of Philadelphia for thirty years.

**Scope and contents of the collection**

The William Barton Rogers manuscript collection consists primarily of family and professional correspondence, but also includes notes, drafts of speeches and legislative petitions, documents relating to the founding of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, scientific publications, and biographical material collected after his death in 1882. There is also correspondence between his wife, Emma Savage Rogers, and his colleagues, particularly when he was ill, as well as her own correspondence after his death.

Two volumes of selected letters of William Barton Rogers and other members of his family were published in 1896. These volumes, titled *Life and Letters of William Barton Rogers*, were edited by his widow and they constitute an important source of information about the family. The relationship between the published volumes of letters and the manuscript collection is unclear. Not all the letters that appear in *Life and Letters* still exist in the Rogers papers. At the same time, there are letters in the manuscript collection that were not published in *Life and Letters*.

**Family and scientific correspondence**

The strength of the collection is the extensive family and professional correspondence represented in it. For the years 1821 to 1851 the papers that have been preserved are primarily family correspondence. In the case of the Rogers family, since all four of the Rogers brothers were noted scientists, family correspondence often doubled as scientific correspondence. Each brother corresponded with the others about his own personal and professional activities, new techniques in experimentation, issues in scientific inquiry, and news of other members of the family.


**Geology**
During his years as a teacher at the College of William and Mary and later at the University of Virginia, William Barton Rogers lectured on a variety of subjects, including physics, chemistry, astronomy, geology, and natural history. His professional interest in geology seems to date from Henry Darwin Rogers's first trip to England during the winter of 1832-33. Having secured positions as leaders of state geological surveys, William Barton Rogers in Virginia and Henry Darwin Rogers in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, the two brothers worked closely for several years.

Their combined efforts in fieldwork and interpretation of data led to their theory of the origin of the Appalachian Mountains, first articulated at the meeting of the American Association of Geologists and Naturalists in 1842. The theory was controversial from the moment of its presentation to the scientific community, and modern geologists have completely rejected it.

Although the Rogers theory failed to gain acceptance, their meticulously accurate fieldwork is still recognized as a major contribution to geology, and the controversial theory, along with the fieldwork, made the Rogers brothers well-known among geologists of the nineteenth century. In this light, the almost complete lack of field notes in the Rogers papers is disappointing.

Scientific papers in the collection include William Barton Rogers's notes on published articles on various topics, drafts of his own articles, and a draft of a textbook, as well as correspondence with other scientists. The scientific papers are more substantial after about 1858, by which time William Barton Rogers had settled in Boston. After Life and Letters had been published, Rogers widow, Emma Savage Rogers, donated letters and books on geology relating to the state geological survey to the Virginia State Library.

**Scientific Societies**

In addition to strictly scientific activities, William Barton Rogers's correspondence and other papers reflect his involvement with developing scientific societies, among them the National Academy of Sciences, the American Social Science Association, and the American Association of Geologists and Naturalists, which later became the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Rogers served terms as president of the American Association of Geologists and Naturalists in 1847, president of the American Social Science Association beginning in 1865, and president of the National Academy of Sciences from 1879 to 1882. Because of his involvement with these and other scientific societies, Rogers's papers include correspondence with Alexander Dallas Bache, Spencer Fullerton Baird, O. C. Marsh, Simon Newcomb, H. C. Williams, F. W. Putnam, James Hall, F. B. Sanborn, Joseph Henry, J. S. Newberry, Gamaliel Bradford, Otto Struve, Edward Burgess, Weir Mitchell, and Samuel Scudder. The documentation of Rogers's term as president of the National Academy of Sciences is particularly complete, and includes notes for meetings, drafts of proceedings, copies of committee reports, and circular letters as well as general correspondence.

**Massachusetts Institute of Technology**

From 1860 to 1870, and again from 1875 until William Barton Rogers's death, the collection is dominated by papers relating to the foundation, organization, and administration of MIT. Documents relating to the initial organization of the school include lists of people to whom information about the new school should be sent, subscription records of donors, informal memoranda on meetings, drafts of the memorials to the legislature, and correspondence among those in the community who supported the development of the school. The book Mind and Hand: The Birth of MIT, by Julius A. Stratton and Loretta Mannix, as well
as *Life and Letters of William Barton Rogers*, will enhance understanding of the finding aid and the collection.

Rogers is recognized as the founder of MIT, and from 1862 until 1870, and again from 1879 until 1881, he served as president of the Institute. The collection includes correspondence with students, prospective students, faculty, and officials of the Institute. Because of Rogers's role as primary administrator, letters of application from prospective faculty members, letters of recommendation, bills, accounts, and student petitions also appear in the Rogers papers. Subseries C of series 2, Documents related to the founding of MIT is an important source of information about the early years of MIT. Drafts of reports and correspondence on these events are also found in series 1, which is arranged chronologically.

In 1870, Rogers retired from the presidency of MIT because of poor health. There are few papers dating from the 1870s, although Rogers's successor to the presidency, John Daniel Runkle, kept him informed of Institute affairs. In 1878, Runkle resigned and in December 1879 Rogers became president of MIT for the second time. Correspondence among Rogers, Runkle, and President Charles W. Eliot of Harvard on the subject of the proposed merger is extant in the collection. At the same time, MIT was searching for a successor to Rogers, who had agreed to serve only until a new president could be found. Francis Amasa Walker was chosen to succeed Rogers, and correspondence between the two men about the mechanics of the change of office is also in the collection.

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**Arrangement of collection**

Organized into two series: Series 1. Correspondence and Notebooks, Series 2. Writings and Publications

Series 2 has been arranged into six subseries. A. Publications on geology and related sciences by William Barton Rogers, Henry Darwin Rogers, and Robert Empie Rogers; B. Geology publications by Henry Darwin Rogers; C. Documents of the founding of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; D. Publications of organizations; E. Sources for biography of William Barton Rogers; and F. Clippings.

Each series is arranged chronologically. The dated items in the collection are followed by undated items, which are grouped by type of document (correspondence, drafts, notes) insofar as they could be identified.

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**Administrative Information**

**Publication Information**
Revision Description
Revised by Erin Edwards and Elizabeth Andrews 2007, 2009

Access note
The collection is open for research.

Intellectual property rights
Access to collections in the Institute Archives and Special Collections is not authorization to publish. Separate written application for permission to publish must be made to the Institute Archives. Copyright of some items in this collection may be held by respective creators, not by the donor of collection.

Custodial history note
The collection is an aggregate of papers given to the MIT Libraries between 1941 and 1978, and a small number of items donated or transferred to the Institute Archives and Special Collections since 1978. It is probable that most of the Rogers papers were given to the MIT Libraries by Emma Savage Rogers after the 1896 publication of *Life and Letters*, two volumes of selected letters of William Barton Rogers that she edited with the assistance of William T. Sedgwick. Many of the documents bear editorial markings, and some typed manuscripts of letters, annotated in Emma Savage Rogers's hand are also among the papers. Additional items were initially cataloged into the Libraries book collection, and were relocated and placed with this collection when it was formally processed in 1978 and 1979.

Location of originals
The original charter (Act to Incorporate the Massachusetts Institute of Technology) is located at the Massachusetts State Archives.

Related Materials

Related archival materials

COLLECTIONS AT MIT

MC 2
Rogers family papers, 1811-1904

MC 3
William Barton Rogers II papers, 1817-1919
MC 7
  John D. Runkle papers, 1853-1880
AC 278
  MIT Corporation minutes, 1862-

COLLECTIONS AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS

The Library of Virginia
  Virginia Geological Survey Records, 1836-1842
Historical Society of Philadelphia
  papers
National Academy of Sciences Archives
  records

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

• American Association for the Advancement of Science.
• Association of American Geologists and Naturalists.
• Committee of Associated Institutions of Science and Arts. (Boston, Mass.)
• Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Alumni Association.
• Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Society of Arts.
• National Academy of Sciences (U.S.)

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• Agassiz, Louis, 1807-1873
• Andrew, John A. (John Albion), 1818-1867
• Atkinson, Edward, 1827-1905
• Crafts, J.M. (James Mason), 1839-1917
• Crosby, William Otis, 1850-1925
• Cross, Charles R. (Charles Robert), 1848-1921
• Dalton, Charles Henry
• Eliot, Charles William, 1834-1926
• Hilgard, J.E. (Julius Erasmus), 1825-1891
• Hitchcock, Edward, 1828-1911
• Holman, Silas W. (Silas Whitcomb), 1856-1900
• Kneeland, Samuel, 1821-1888
• Lanza, Gaetano, 1848-1928
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• Webb, Thomas H. (Thomas Hopkins), 1801-1866

Subject(s)

• Boston (Mass.) -- History -- 19th century
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*The Massachusetts Institute of Technology: A Brief Account of its Foundation, Character, and Equipment.* Boston, Mass.: published by the Institute for use at the St. Louis Exposition, 1904.

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*Objects and Plan of an Institute of Technology including a Society of Arts, a Museum of Arts, and a School of Industrial Science.* second edition. Boston: printed by John Wilson and Son. 1861

Objects and Plan of an Institute of Technology including a Society of Arts, a Museum of Arts, and a School of Industrial Science. second edition. , 1861

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*Scope and Plan of the School of Industrial Science of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as Reported by the Committee on Instruction of the Institute, and Adopted by the Government, May 30, 1864. Boston: printed by John Wilson and Son. 1864*

Scope and Plan of the School of Industrial Science of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as Reported by the Committee on Instruction of the Institute, and Adopted by the Government, May 30, 1864. Boston: printed by John Wilson and Son., 1864


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Manuscript draft, *American Textbook of Geology* undated

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Notes undated


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**Series 2. Writings and Publications**

**Subseries A. Publications on geology and related sciences by William Barton Rogers and publications co-authored with Henry Darwin Rogers or Robert Empie Rogers**

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Rogers, William Barton. "An elementary treatise on the strength of materials, being the substance of the lectures on that subject, delivered in the School of Engineering of the University of Virginia." Charlottesville: Tomkins & Noel. 1838


Rogers, William Barton, and Henry Darwin Rogers. [Coal reports]. A bound volume of nine papers. before 1851

| Box Folder |
|---|---|
| 1. Rogers, William Barton. "On the age of the coal rocks of eastern Virginia." Pages 298-316. 1843 |
| 2. Rogers, William Barton. "On the connection of thermal springs in Virginia with anticlinal axes and faults." Pages 317-347. 1843 |
4. Rogers, William Barton, and Henry Darwin Rogers. "On the physical structure of the Appalachian chain...." Pages 474-531. 1843

5. Rogers, William Barton. "Observations of subterranean termperature in the coal mines of eastern Virginia." Pages 532-538. [On pages 539-544 is "Explanation of the Plates I-XVII," the plates refering to fossils and other geological items not included in the bound "Coal Reports"; these are followed on page 544 by "Explanations for Plates XVIII-XXI, inclusive," which shows Sections of the Appalachian Chain, which are bound between page 544 and the next item, number 6]. circa 1843 or 1844


Rogers, William Barton. "Elements of the mechanical philosophy, for the use of the junior students of the University of Virginia." Boston: Thurston, Torry and Emerson, printers. 1852

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<th>Rogers, William Barton.</th>
<th>&quot;Address before the Lyceum of Natural History of Williams College, August 14, 1855.&quot;</th>
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<td><em>American Journal of Science</em> (2) 21: 339-343. 1856</td>
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<td>Rogers, William Barton.&quot;Proofs of the Protozoic Age of Some of the Altered Rocks of Eastern Massachusetts from Fossils recently discovered.&quot;</td>
<td>American Academy of Arts and Sci, vol.iii, 315-318. 1856</td>
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<td>Rogers, William Barton.</td>
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<td><em>Edinburgh New Philosophical Journal</em> 6: 35-42. 1858</td>
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<td>Rogers, William Barton.</td>
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<td><em>American Journal of Science</em> (2) 26: 1-15. 1858</td>
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<td>Rogers, William Barton.</td>
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<td><em>Edinburgh New Phil. Jour.</em>, vol. xi, 90-99. 1860</td>
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<td>Rogers, William Barton.</td>
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<td>Rogers, William Barton. &quot;Address on the scientific work and character of Joseph Henry, delivered in the Hall of Representatives, Washington, D. C.&quot; printed by order of Congress. 1880</td>
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**General Note**

In the first edition of this book, William Barton Rogers wrote the section on Virginia and West Virginia. In the second edition, the section on West Virginia has been revised, but William Barton Rogers' article on Virginia has been retained.
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<tr>
<td>Rogers, Henry Darwin. &quot;A few facts regarding the geological survey of Pennsylvannia, exposing the erroneous statements and claims of J.P. Lesley&quot;. 1859</td>
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**Subseries C. Documents of the founding of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology**

**Historical note**


The earliest of the documents pertaining explicitly to the precursor of MIT was a memorial drawn up by Dr. Samuel Kneeland petitioning the 1859 Massachusetts legislature for a grant of state land in Back Bay for a Conservatory of Art and Science. It was presented to the legislature on March 30, 1859 as House Document No. 260 but was not approved.
William B. Rogers's name appears in the list of petitioners but he seems to have taken little part in the effort, probably because he was away from Boston. However, when the decision was made to submit another petition, this time to the 1860 legislature, William was asked to prepare a new memorial. This he did during the summer of 1859 and it was presented to the legislature as House Document No. 13. As before, this was not approved.

A subcommittee of the Association of Institutions was charged with another effort and Rogers was asked to prepare the requested plan which he did in the summer of 1860. The resulting document was his *Objects and Plan of an Institute of Technology*. This document is commonly referred to in discussions of the beginning of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as the founding document.

*Objects and Plan* was accepted by the Committee of Associated Institutions, read at a public meeting at the Boston Board of Trade on October 5, 1860, and submitted soon after to the Massachusetts legislature.

Action came swiftly from the legislature in the form of a joint standing committee, and again Rogers was asked to prepare a report, which appeared in March 1861 as Report of the Joint Standing Committee of the Massachusetts legislature of 1861 on the Memorial of the Associated Institutions of Science and Art. House Document 171, March 19, 1861.

On April 10, 1861 (two days before the start of the Civil War) the legislature passed and Governor John Andrew signed An Act to incorporate the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Acts 1861, chapter 183) which provided for a square of Back Bay land between Newbury and Boylston streets. The many activities centering around the memorials and reports to the Massachusetts legislature regarding the Back Bay land and the chartering of MIT are related by Rogers in an 1861 account titled *An Account of Proceedings Preliminary to the Organization of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology* (Boston, 1861).

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"Memorial of the Associated Institutions of Art and Science to the Massachusetts Legislature, 1860, asking for a reservation of lands on the Back Bay." House document number 13. 1860 January

"Memorial of the Associated Institutions of Art and Science to the Massachusetts Legislature, 1860, asking for a reservation of lands on the Back Bay." House document number 13., 1860 January
"Objects and plan of an institute of technology, including a society of arts, a museum of arts, and a school of industrial science, proposed to be established in Boston." Prepared by William Barton Rogers by direction of the Committee of Associated Institutions of Science and Arts. Boston: printed by John Wilson and Son. 1860

"Objects and plan of an institute of technology, including a society of arts, a museum of arts, and a school of industrial science, proposed to be established in Boston." Prepared by William Barton Rogers by direction of the Committee of Associated Institutions of Science and Arts. Boston: John Wilson and Son, printers, 1860.

"Report of the Joint Standing Committee of the Massachusetts Legislature of 1861 on the memorial of the Associated Institutions of Science and Art." House document number 171. 1861 March 19

"An account of proceedings preliminary to the organization of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology." Boston: printed by John Wilson and Son. 1861

"An account of proceedings preliminary to the organization of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology." Boston: John Wilson and Son, printers, 1861.

"Addition to the act to incorporate the Massachusetts Institute of Technology." Massachusetts Legislature: Senate document number 226. 1865 May 1

Subseries D. Publications of organizations
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<th>Publications of organizations</th>
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<td>American Association for the Advancement of Science. &quot;Resolutions concerning the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.&quot; <em>Proceedings</em> 30. 1881</td>
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<td>American Social Science Association. &quot;Announcement of general meeting.&quot; Includes list of officers and members, May 1880; amended constitution; list of publications. Boston: Tolman and White, printers. 1880</td>
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<td>&quot;Memorial addressed to the honorable William Windom in relation to the regulations for the Coast and Geodetic Survey of the United States, lately issued by the Treasury Department.&quot; Signed by Wharton Baker and others. 1881</td>
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<td>Minor, Franklin. &quot;An oration delivered before the Society of Alumni of the University of Virginia.&quot; Printed by order of the Society. Charlottesville. 1844</td>
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<td>National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D. C. &quot;Address delivered before the National Academy of Sciences, April 15, 1879, by Professor O. C. March, acting president.&quot; 1879</td>
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<td>National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D. C. &quot;Constitution and membership.&quot; 1879</td>
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<td>National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D. C. &quot;Constitution and rules of the National Academy of Sciences, as amended and adopted, April 17, 1872.&quot; 1872</td>
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<td>National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D. C. Proceedings, incomplete. 1876-1879</td>
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<td>National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D. C. &quot;Report for 1879.&quot;</td>
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<td>U.S. 45th Congress. &quot;A bill to authorize the National Academy of Sciences to receive and hold trust funds for the promotion of science, and for other purposes.&quot; U.S. 45th Congress, second session, Senate. Bill 1336. Introduced by Mr. Howe, read twice, and referred to the Committee on the Library, 29 May 1878. U.S. 45th Congress, third</td>
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Sources for biography of William Barton Rogers

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<td>session, Senate. Bill 1336. Reported with an amendment, February 29, 1879</td>
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<td>U.S. National Board of Health. &quot;Reports and papers.&quot; Number 1, April 7, 1879</td>
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<td>Virginia. &quot;A bill authorizing the secretary of the commonwealth to subscribe for copies of the report of William Barton Rogers, on the geology of the state...&quot; Virginia Senate. Bill number 98. 1875</td>
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<td>Virginia. University. &quot;An address to the public: unanimously adopted by the students of the University of Virginia.&quot; Charlottesville. circa 1840</td>
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<td>Shrock, Robert R. Geology at MIT, 1865-1965. Appendix B. Biographies, Biographical References, and Other Sources of Information William Barton Rogers (1804-1882) 1977</td>
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<td>Shrock, Robert R. Geology at MIT, 1865-1965. Appendix B. Biographies, Biographical References, and Other Sources of Information reWilliam Barton Rogers (1804-1882), 1977</td>
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**"Tribute to Professor William Barton Rogers on his resignation as President of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology." Boston Daily Advertiser. 1870 June 2**

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Ruschenberger, W. S. W. "A sketch of the life of Robert E. Rogers, M.D., LL.D., with biographical notices of his father and brothers" (with cover title "The Brothers Rogers"). Philadelphia: McCalla and Stavely, printers. 1885

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Walker, Francis A. "Memoir of William Barton Rogers. Read before the National Academy [of Science], April 1887." Washington, D.
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<td>C. National Academy of Sciences Biographical Memoirs 3:1-13, 1895. 1887</td>
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<td>&quot;Centennial commemoration of William Barton Rogers, 1804-1904, held in Huntington Hall, Rogers Building (MIT) on December 7, 1904.&quot; Boston: Geo. H. Ellis Co., printers, 1905. also includes program of commemoration. 1904</td>
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<td>Roberts, J. K. &quot;William Barton Rogers and his contributions to the geology of Virginia, read before the National Academy of Sciences at the University of Virginia Meeting on Tuesday, November 19, 1935.&quot; American Philosophical Society. Miscellanea, photocopy. 1/2: 65-68. 1936</td>
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<td>Roberts, J. K. &quot;William Barton Rogers (1804-1882) and his contributions to the geology of Virginia.&quot; Geological Society of America, Proceedings. 1935: 305-310. 1935</td>
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<td>Ewing, G. W. &quot;Early teaching of science at the College of William and Mary in Virginia.&quot; College of William and Mary, B. 32/4. 1938</td>
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<td>&quot;The William Barton Rogers Memorial Science Hall, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia&quot; program notice. circa 1950</td>
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<td>House bill no. 171 1861</td>
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