National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1 Name of Property			
1. Name of Property historic name Bromwell Wire Works	•		
historic name Bromwell Wire Works other names/site number	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		
other hames/site number			
2. Location			
street & number First and Ireland S		· ·	
city, town Greensburg	treets		not for publication
	inty Decatur	n ka	
Thorana code IN Col	inty Decatur	. code 031	zip code 47240
3. Classification		•	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
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State or Federal agency and bureau			Date
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet Signature of commenting or other official	the National Register c	riteria. L See cor	
Signature of commenting of other official			Date
State or Federal agency and bureau			
and bureau			
National Park Service Certification			
hereby, certify that this property is:			
entered in the National Register.	•		
See continuation sheet.			
determined eligible for the National			
Register. See continuation sheet.			
determined not eligible for the			
National Register.			
realional negister.			
removed from the National Register.			
	Signature of the Keep	er	Date of Action

6. Function or Use	
Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Industry/Processing/Extraction:	Industry/Processing/Extraction:
manufacturing facility	manufacturing facility
7. Description	
Architectural Classification (enter categories from Instructions)	Materials (enter categories from instructions)
	foundation stone/limestone
Late 19th and Early 20th Century	walls brick
American Movements	
other: Victorian Functional	roofasphalt
	otherwood
	steel

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The former Bromwell Wire Works buildings are located in the northwest portion of Greensburg, Indiana, on the northwest corner of Ireland and First Streets. The immediate area to the east, south and west of the site is a late nineteenth century residential area; an open field on the north end of the site separates the buildings from a group of modern light industrial structures beyond the property. The west edge of the site is defined by a former railroad right-of-way (Photos 1, 2).

The mill complex consists of a number of separate structures grouped about a central open space (see site plan). Beginning on the south end of the site and proceeding in a clockwise direction, the structures that compose the property are as follows:

The original 1903 factory is a brick two story gabled ell whose long leg extends along First Street (Photo 3). The Timpes gently down to the north and west from the intersection of First and Ireland Streets, giving the building's rock-faced ashlar foundation progressively more exposure down its length. The walls are made of soft-pressed common brick laid in common bond with header courses widely spaced up their height. The tops of the end walls extend upward past the side walls to form parapet gables. The tops of the side walls have a simple projecting metal cornice trimmed with a large crown mold on the face of the box gutter. The smooth planes of the brick walls are interrupted only by masonry openings with plain reveals and segmental arches of header coursing. On the long sides of the building these openings are grouped into sets of three; on the street (south) elevation this pattern is emphasized by the use of projecting pilasters to separate the grouped openings. At opposite ends of the south facade, entrances are set into wider segmental-arched openings. On the gable ends (east and west walls) pairs of window openings are widely separated (Photo 4). Though they have all retained their original nine-over-nine double-hung sash, all the side windows of the one story rear wing and alternate bays of the windows on the main wing have been covered by wood panels. The ridgeline of the factory was originally topped by widely spaced roof monitors. Each of these was square in plan and had three six-light sash panels on the sides parallel to the ridgeline beneath the plain projecting eaves of its gabled roof. Four such monitors were set on the ridge of the main wing and a fifth was centered on the ridge of the rear wing; they were apparently removed sometime after World War II. Descrintment the loss of

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the roof monitors, the concealment of some of the windows, and painting of the masonry, comparison of the building with historic views made about 1910 and 1938 reveals that the outward appearance of this building is largely original (Photos 5, 6).

The interior of the original factory is also largely intact, and it consists for the most part of exposed masonry walls and the elements of a wooden structural system. On each floor, each wing of the factory has two lines of timber columns which divide the floor area into equal parts and support major beams which run the length of each wing; the beams in turn support open wood joists and bridging (Photos 7-9). On the first floor of the main wing, cast iron saddles are used atop the columns; in the remainder of the building, including a basement under the rear wing (Photo 10), tapered wood timbers are used as saddles (a partially excavated crawl space exists under the main wing). Both wings of the building have attic spaces in which the rake of the rafters is supported by two files of columns with diagonal bracing (Photos 11, 12). At either end of the main wing, an open set of straight-run stairs extends from the first to the second floor (Photo 13). On each end of the second floor, an enclosed stairs extends to the attic. Both the stairs and a small office area on the southwest corner of the first floor are clad in beaded wood siding. The stairways have handrails consisting on sections of modern galvanized steel piping. The interiors of the window openings have exposed masonry surrounds with timber sills (Photo 14).

On the north end of the rear wing, a square masonry shaft contains a freight elevator. The openings now used as elevator landings originally connected with passages to a three story wooden tower which was also a part of the original construction (see Photo 5). This tower had a shaft with battered sides topped by an overhanging, pyramidal-roofed third story. This structure contained a continuous belt mechanism on which screen cloth was dried after painting. The tower was demolished about 1938, after a replacement structure was built onto the roof of the galvanizing building (see below). At present, the site of the tower is occupied by a number of modern metal-clad pole buildings (Photo 15).

Another structure which does survive from the original construction is the boiler house, a one and a half story gabled brick structure that is located midway along the north side of the 1903 factory and stands with its length aligned perpendicular to the mill (Photo 16). The boiler house repeats the detailing used on the factory, including parapet gables and the use of pairs of window openings set far apart on its north and east elevations (Photo 17). A pair of doors under a transom is set in the center bay of the north wall, but covered by a panel on the exterior. On its south and west sides, the boiler house has door

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and window openings whose irregular placement was apparently determined by functional requirements (Photo 18). All the doors are simple four panel designs, and the windows are of the same type used on the factory (Photo 19). The interior of the building is a single large room with a concrete floor, exposed brick walls, and timber framing. The entire framing system of the roof consists of modern trusses installed after fire destroyed the original roof several years ago (Photos 20, 21).

Directly north of the boiler house, a metal water tower was built about 1928 (see Photo 6) and later demolished about 1970. The north side of the site's central open space is defined by a one story hip-roofed frame building constructed in 1922 as a galvanizing shop (Photos 22, 23). This building is a long narrow rectangle in plan, and its interior consists of a single large room with a concrete floor, walls clad in beaded siding, and open roof framing (Photo 24). The exterior of this structure was originally clad in corrugated steel; this material is now concealed behind modern painted vertical steel siding. Window units of the same type used in the original buildings are widely distributed around the perimeter of the galvanizing shop. When a new paint drying tower was built in 1938, it was constructed in the center of this building and extended two stories above it (see Photo 6). This addition was removed about 1970, and the roofline of the building returned to its original form.

At its northwest corner, the galvanizing shop is connected by an enclosed, metal-clad wooden passage to the southeast corner of the one story brick warehouse building, whose long, narrow rectangular form extends into an open field to the north. The southern two-thirds of the building were erected in 1910; the gabled north end of the building was added in 1928. The brick walls of the building are divided into bays by a series of pilasters, and each bay contains a single window with nine-over-nine double-hung sash set in a segmental-arched masonry opening (Photo 25). The wooden north wall is clad in asphalt siding, and a metal awning has been added to the entire length of the building's east side (Photo 26). The interior of the building is a single large room with a wood floor and two longitudinal files of timber columns supporting open wood framing (Photo 27).

Comparison of the present buildings with historic photographs shows that the buildings have a high degree of architectural integrity. The original mill has lost six louvered wooden ventilators formerly located on its ridgeline (cf. Photo 6), and the two sets of entrance doors at either end of the south elevation have been replaced with later doors set in the original jambs. The 1903 factory retains all of its original window sash and metal cornice, though the exterior masonry has been

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painted. The interior of the building differs from its original appearance only in that the belt-driven wire looms have been removed, modern pipe handrails have been put on the stairways, and homosote panellig has been put over the interior of the carsiding partition that forms an office on the southwest corner of the first floor of the mill. The major difference between the present and original appearance of the 1903 mill is the loss of the wooden drying tower once located at the north end of the rear mill (cf. Photo 5). But the removal of this structure took place in 1938, during the property's period of significance, and this development should thus be seen as a part of the historical development of the property by its later owner, the Cyclone Fence Company.

The 1938 drying tower has since been removed from the galvanizing shed, which was thereby returned to its 1922 form. Though the building's original siding has been covered with modern steel siding, that feature does still exist, as do all of its original window sash, doors, and eave eave treatment, as well as its original open interior framing.

The only structure whose integrity has been seriously compromised is the 1910 warehouse with its 1928 addition. While this building retains its original doors, windows, and interior open framing and exposed brick walls, a modern metal awning has been added along most of its east side. But this awning has been added in such a manner that its removal would leave the building otherwise intact.

The only completely modern intrusions on the site are the metal pole buildings that stand on the site of the 1903 drying tower. But the manner in which these have been connected to the rear wing of the 1903 mill did not result in the loss of original fabric from the mill, and the removal of these modern additions would thus be fully reversible.

8. Statement of Significance	
Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation nationally statewide	to other properties:
Applicable National Register Criteria XA BXC D	
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)	F G
	d of Significance Significant Dates 1903, 1910, 1922, 1928
Cultur n/a	al Affiliation
	ect/Builder e & Porter

The Bromwell Wire Works is of local architectural and historical significance. The buildings that comprise the property constitute the largest group of historic industrial structures in Greensburg. The site also has a number of important historical associations, including its place within the context of economic development activity in Greensburg at the turn of the century, and the prominence each of the property's successive occupants had as the town's largest industrial employer through World War II. The property is also associated with Pulse and Porter, a locally-based construction firm whose regional activity made them the other major employer in the community at the turn of the century.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The structures included in the Bromwell Wire Works are the largest and most intact group of Victorian industrial buildings remaining in Greensburg. The design characteristics of the buildings, such as their massing, simplified Victorian detailing, and heavy timber structural systems had become common features of industrial structures by the midnineteenth century. Though not possessing enough features associated with any particular style to be designated as belonging to a specific stylistic category, the Bromwell Wire Works buildings do represent a recognizable type of historic architecture, and they possess a high degree of architectural integrity, as revealed by comparison of current and historic views of the buildings.

Within the geographical and historical context of Greensburg and Decatur County, the Bromwell Wire Works had few architectural peers. A review of available histories and of the Sanborn fire insurance maps of Greensburg and other county towns reveals that with the exception of two other manufacturing plants in the immediate vicinity of the Bromwell works, the only other quasi-industrial structures in Greensburg and Decatur County were those related to agricultural processing, including several grain elevators and a poultry processing plant in Greensburg

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and a cannery in the nearby town of Milford. Of those other historic industrial structures, the only survivors are the greatly altered Kova grain elevator, located north of the Bromwell factory, and the 1921 C. J. Lloyd Company poultry plant, a smaller Craftsman-style structure located on the south side of downtown Greensburg.

Historical Background

The Bromwell Wire Works has important historical associations with the efforts of the Greensburg Improvement Association to develop and maintain a local industrial economy.

The Association was organized in 1892 as a formal vehicle through which pledges of capital by several prominent citizens could be used to entice the Baxter Carriage Company of Cincinnati to build a plant in Greensburg. A one hundred ten acre tract of farmland adjacent to a rail line on the northwest side of Greensburg was purchased by the Association; a portion of this land was given to the Baxter Company as a site, and the western part of the land was platted as the 26-block City Park Addition. The Baxter Company went into receivership in 1896, however, and the factory was sold to another industrial prospect lured to Greensburg by the Association, the Lincoln Carriage Company. During the 1890's the Association also succeeded in getting a chair factory to relocate to Greensburg from Anderson, Indiana; this plant was located to the north of the carriage factory, on the same tract.

During the decade between the census of 1890 and that of 1900, Greensburg and surrounding Washington Township experienced a population increase of 19.6 per cent, and the county population increased almost forty per cent. By 1905, however, these gains and the industrial growth of Greensburg were in serious jeopardy. In 1903, the Fuller Chair Company returned to its former home, Anderson, Indiana, lured by the offer of a free factory site there. The company's Greensburg plant was refitted by a local investor to produce implement handles, but this venture had failed by 1905. In that same year, the Lincoln Carriage Company plant burned to the ground. Though rebuilt on a reduced scale as a plant to produce farm implements, this venture soon failed also.

The Greensburg Improvement Association had established its initial contact with the Bromwell Wire and Brush Company of Cincinnati in January of 1903, when William B. Melish, President of the firm, came to Greensburg seeking a location for a branch factory to manufacture wire screen cloth. Besides Cincinnati, the Bromwell Company also had plants in Mansfield, Ohio, and Jackson, Michigan. By the following April, the Bromwell company had indicated it would locate in Greensburg

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if a site of at least eight acres situated on a rail line were offered, and a workforce of one hundred were available. In response to this, the Association received over three hundred employment applications within ten days, and a local subscription was organized to raise \$ 2,000 for the purchase of a site to the south of the existing carriage and chair factories. In May, 1903, the Bromwell Company announced that it would locate in Greensburg; the next month, work began on the construction of the new factory, which finally opened in the summer of 1904.

The construction contract for the first buildings on the site went to Pulse and Porter, a local general contractor whose regional activity made it the largest local employer after the Bromwell works. Pulse and Porter counted among their projects construction of two large complexes of buildings, the Odd Fellows Home at Greensburg (c. 1895, Philip Jaeckel, architect) and the first buildings at the Southeastern State Hospital, Madison, Indiana (c. 1898). They were also responsible for a number of buildings on the campuses of Indiana University (Science Hall) and Hanover College (Science Hall and Hendricks Library), as well as interurban railroad power stations as far away as Anderson and Warsaw (1903). Pulse and Porter operated their own woodworking factory in the city, to supply both their own needs and as a retail outlet. Comparison of the data given in the 1915 History of Decatur County shows that at that time the Bromwell Company had seventy employees, making it the largest local employer, while Pulse and Porter had employed up to 500 men at a time, though these were regionally distributed to various sites where they had projects underway.

The Improvement Association's recruitment of the Bromwell company proved to be both its best and last economic development success. The opening of the Bromwell plant came at an opportune time for the sake of maintaining Greensburg's earlier industrial gains. While population growth in the period 1900 to 1910 was a more modest three per cent for Greensburg and Washington Township and almost eight per cent for Decatur County as a whole, it can truthfully be said that but for the arrival of the Bromwell Company in Greensburg, the community would probably have faced the real prospect of a loss in population. As it was, however, the addition of the Bromwell factory to the local economy helped foster growth in the physical fabric of Greensburg. The April 29, 1904, issue of the Greensburg Standard quoted the Rushville Republican as

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having enviously noted:

"Greensburg is having the greatest boom in its history. Besides many dwelling houses, several business blocks are underway, and at a meeting of the lodge I.O.O.F., a committee was appointed to make arrangements for a new hall and business block. Contractors say they are compelled to turn away work because of the scarcity of help."

Another local newspaper, the <u>Greensburg News</u>, noted in its May 20, 1904, issue that,

"In a ten squares walk this morning, a News representative found 91 men at work, building houses, putting in steel, and other work of manufacturing."

In 1906, the newly-formed Greensburg Commercial Club, which had superceded the Improvement Association that year, bought the land to the east of the factory and platted the 96 lots of the Commercial Club Addition.

The Bromwell Company remained the largest employer in Greensburg until 1923, when the company ceased operations. Five years later, the factory complex was bought by the Cyclone Fence Company, a subsidiary of the United States Steel Corporation, which reopened the plant to produce woven wire and chain link fence. This development apparently fueled a spurt of local economic growth: while the local population had remained virtually unchanged during the decade between censuses of 1910 and 1920, between 1920 and 1930 both Greensburg and Decatur County posted gains of approximately six per cent. During the 1930's, both the city and county had a slightly more modest growth of approximately five per cent.

The economic impact of the employment represented by the Bromwell Company and its successors during this century can be seen appreciated best by further scrutiny of the census figures. In 1900, when the population of Greensburg was 5,034, the average family size in Decatur County was 4.1 persons, yielding a total of 1,227 households. Even assuming that in each household there were only one member of the local workforce, this would mean that a total employment of 100 persons at the wireworks (as reported in accounts of the plant's opening) would represent 8.14 per cent of the town's families (12th Census, Volume 2, Part 2, p. clxvii). Though this would be a significant percentage, it is likely that the actual percentage of local employment represented by the factory at that time was much higher. This is best illustrated by looking at a later year for which a more detailed enumeration of the population of Greensburg is available.

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In 1940, the first year for which both a further breakdown of the population figures was given, and for which there is a known number of wireworks employees (200 persons) the percentages are as follows: of the 6,065 people in Greensburg, the total number of all persons employed was 2,026, or 33.4 per cent of the total, which means that the wireworks employees were 9.7 per cent of the total number of persons employed in Greensburg. But in the categories of employment that can be equated to industrial workers (namely, "craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers", "operatives and kindred workers", and "laborers, excluding farm workers") which total 707 people, the wireworks' employees would have constituted 33.4 per cent, a very high percentage of all workers employed in any manner that could possibly include the wireworks (cf. 16th Census, Volume 2, Part 2, p. 781).

By World War II, the company had 200 employees, and it was still the city's largest industry. According to local residents, the wire screen cloth the company produced was classified as a strategic material by the federal government during World War II, because the product was considered essential to protecting personnel from insect-borne diseases while waging war in the jungles of the south Pacific; as a result, all employees of the wireworks were exempted from military conscription.

After World War II, the role of the wireworks in the local economy was lessened by the recruitment of a number of other industries, most notably the Delta Faucet Company. Though no longer the largest local employer, the wireworks has continued to operate continuously. In 1960, Alden Westhafer, superintendent of the plant for Cyclone Fence Company, bought the factory and renamed it Indiana Wire Products. The new firm's line of products was expanded to include chain link fence, garment racks, panellized bars for use on windows and in jails and security enclosures. Indiana Wire Products remains in operation today in the buildings on the north portion of the Bromwell site.

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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

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The buildings of the Bromwell Wire Works and its successors thus comprise an historic industrial complex which is both the largest and most intact group of such structures in Greensburg, and some of the most tangible evidence of the significant efforts members of the community made to build the local economy by attracting industrial investment. Greensburg's situation was one typical of many Midwestern communities at the turn of the century: a local economy primarily dependent upon agriculture for its livelihood and in need of outside investment in order to build an economy capable of supporting further growth. At the same time, the community had the assets of a supply of semi-skilled labor provided by the rural population, and good access to major markets, provided by its location on two rail lines. These were assets no doubt appreciated by the Bromwell Company, but it was also the case that competition among towns for the sake of attracting industry (such as Greensburg's ultimately unsuccessful tug-of-war with Anderson for the Fuller Chair plant) created an atmosphere in which groups such as the Greensburg Improvement Association felt obligated to offer incentives in order to prevail. While much remains to be known in order to develop fully an understanding of the historical context of such Victorian economic development practices, the local significance of the Improvement Association's efforts can at least be appreciated by considering the role that the Bromwell Company and its successors played as mainstays of the economies of Greensburg and Decatur County over the course of the first half of the twentieth century.

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previously	determined eligible by the National Register	Other State agency
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9. Major Bibliographical References

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BOOKS

Charles Greve, Centennial History of Cincinnati and Representative Citizens, Chicago: Biographical Publishing Company, 1904, 2 vols., Vol. 2, pp. 821-2.

Lewis Harding, editor, <u>History of Decatur County</u>, <u>Indiana</u>. Chicago: B. F. Bowen, 1915. pp. 165-167, 501-503.

MANUSCRIPTS

Cyclone Fence Company, "Appraisal Record of Buildings," corporate files now in possession of Indiana Wire Products Company, Greensburg, Indiana.

MAPS

"Plat Map of Greensburg, Indiana," prepared by R. F. Lee, 1922, copy in Decatur County Recorder's Office, Greensburg, Indiana.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Greensburg, Indiana for the following years: 1899, p. 8; 1906, pp. 7, 10-14; 1913, p. 14; 1927, p. 17; original maps by Sanborn Map Company, Chicago, microfilmed by Chadwyck-Healey Inc., in the collection of the Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

PUBLIC RECORDS

- "Plat of City Park Place Addition," in Plat Book I, p. 16, Decatur County Recorder's Office, Greensburg, Indiana.
- "Plat of Commercial Club Addition," in Plat Book I, p. 88, Decatur County Recorder's Office, Greensburg, Indiana.
- Figures from U. S. Census of 1890, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930, 1940 provided by Data Center, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, Indiana.

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES (in chronological order)

'President of Bromwell Company visits Greensburg (untitled article),' Greensburg Standard, January 30, 1903, p. 3, c. 4.

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- 'chair factory closes (untitled article),' <u>Greensburg Standard</u>, January 27, 1903, p. 1, c. 4.
- "Another Factory for Greensburg," Greensburg Standard, April 17, 1903, p. 2, c. 1.
- "Factory A Fact," Greensburg Standard, May 22, 1903, p. 2, c. 3.
- "Pulse and Porter get It," Greensburg Standard, June 5, 1903, p. 2, c.3
- 'work on Bromwell plant temporarily delayed (untitled article),' Greensburg Standard, October 16, 1903, p. 3, c. 4.
- 'work progressing rapidly on Bromwell plant (untitled article),' Greensburg Standard, November 13, 1903, p. 1, c. 4.
- "Wire Factory," Greensburg News, January 22, 1904, p. 1, c. 4.
- "Wire Factory," Greensburg News, April 15, 1904, p. 2, c. 1.
- 'Greensburg boom noted by Rushville Republican (untitled article),' Greensburg Standard, April 29, 1904, p. 1, c. 4.
- "Industrial Notes," Greensburg News, May 20, 1904, p. 2, c. 2.
- Kenneth Rinker, "Indiana Wire Products Is Family Business,"

 Greensburg Daily News, February 3, 1965, section 2, p. 1, c. 1-8.
- "Cyclone Fence Company Was Decatur County's Largest Employer By The End Of World War II," Greensburg Daily News, "Then and Now Edition," February 26, 1987, p. 4C, c. 1-8.

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PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS):

A Preliminary determination of Individual listing has been denied. Project number 10595IN.

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Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the intersection of the west line of Ireland Street with the north line of First Street and proceeding west along said north line to its intersection with the east line of the former right-of-way of the Vernon, Greensburg and Rushville Railroad Company, then northeast along said right-of-way line to its intersection with the extension of the line of the north wall of the 1928 addition to the 1910 warehouse building, then east along that line to its intersection with the west line of Ireland Street, then south along that line to its intersection with the point of beginning.

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