



# The Old BARN POST

A publication of Friends of Ohio Barns • October, 2020 • Vol. XXIV, Issue 3

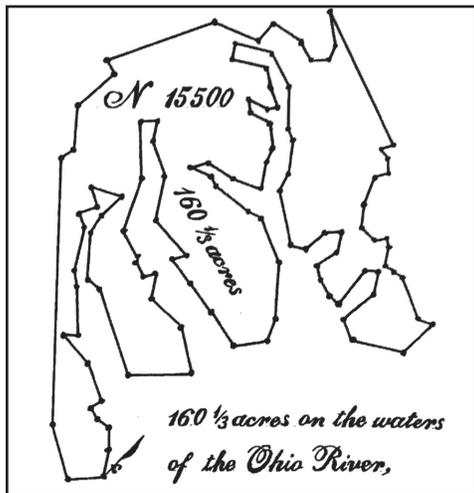
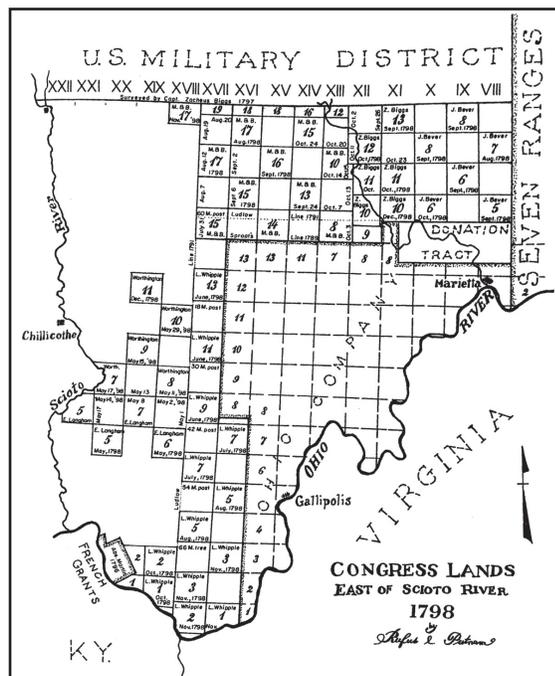
## Order and Chaos – By Design

After the American Revolutionary War colonists from New England, the Middle Atlantic, and Southern states were anxious to head for the Ohio Country. Congress divided the land.

Surveyor Thomas Hutchins, Geographer of the United States, established the Geographer's Line according to the Land Ordinance of 1785. The line began at the point at which the western boundary of Pennsylvania intersected the Ohio River and ran due west for forty-two miles. The Seven Ranges, the first survey under the ordinance, were laid out south of this line. They formed a strip six miles wide that was divided into townships six miles square. The north-south lines were determined by measurements off the North Star. Nearly all surveys in the United States subsequent to this have been done on the township and range format and begin with the line established by Hutchins. There have been some variations as it was being worked out but they too are based on the same rectangular survey principle.

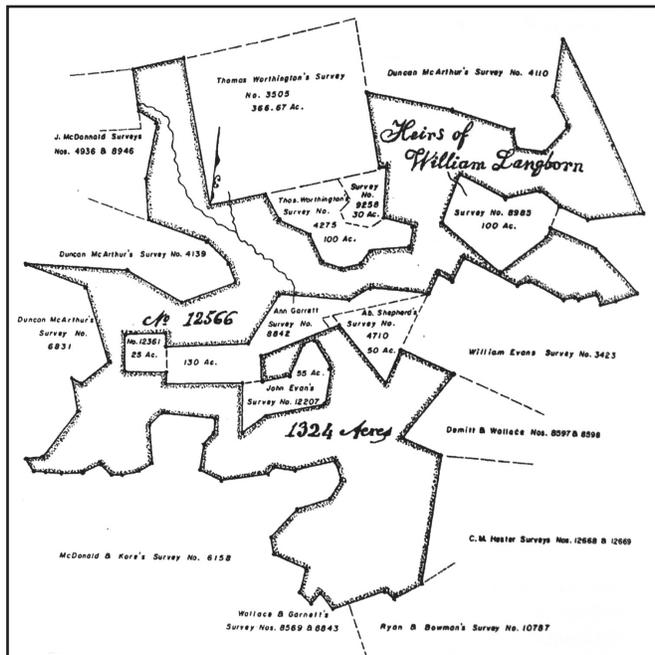
The first major land transfer was the Ohio Company Purchase to a group from Massachusetts. They settled Marietta in 1788. Other subdivisions included the Connecticut Western Reserve, the Scioto Purchase, the Miami Purchase, the Seven Ranges, the U.S. Military District, and Congress Lands. All of these

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Images: from: Blazes, Posts & Stones: A History of Ohio's Original Land Subdivisions James Williams, 2013

Above: A survey of 160 1/3 acres on the Ohio River skirting around land considered to be of inadequate quality.



Above: This 1798 survey by Rufus Putnam, of the Congress Lands east of the Scioto, also shows the Ohio Company Purchase, the U.S. Military District, and the Donation Tract, all following the grid pattern of the Township and Range layout.

Left: Virginia Military Survey No.12566 in Ross County of 1324 acres of land surveyed for the heirs of William Langborn, shows over 120 different angles turned by the surveyor's transit, and distances measured with the chain, for a single parcel of land.



Image by: Tom O'Grady

Art and architecture in service to the Ohio economy for nearly 150 years.

## DESIGN, Continued from Page 1

subdivisions are based on the Township and Range Survey.

The land between the Scioto River and the Little Miami River, however, was claimed by Virginia and warranted to veterans of the war. This tract, the Virginia Military District, did not adhere to the Township and Range Survey and opted for the indiscriminate survey or metes and bounds survey. Instead of being based on standardized north south and east-west survey lines, properties were defined by measurements between natural landmarks such as large trees that were blazed and stones or posts that were set and marked. Some of the early settlers came in and claimed their property by following the contours of the best land and blazed trees and set corner stones and posts. These properties have some of the most convoluted and complicated boundaries defined by man. In addition, many of the original Witness Trees are decayed and gone while meandering streams have moved and buried posts and stones.

By: Tom O'Grady

## Changing Scenery

“The Pattern of our early landscape was capacious and orderly. Its texture, which were the people and their farms, had the mellowness and dignity of well-seasoned wood. Close at hand there were lanes with vaulting canopies of trees and among them were houses with personalities like human beings. At a distance it was all like a patchwork quilt of farm plots sewn together with a rough black stitching of stone fences.

But the advance of “improvements” has done blatant and rude things to much of this inherited landscape. It began with billboards and roadside stands, soon to be followed by bungalows to match. We thought these things were forgivable indications of a growing countryside and that, so far from becoming typical American scenery, they would soon rot and disappear. But this pattern of organized confusion quickly led to sewers and paved streets. Supermarkets and shopping centers appeared, flanked by homes that looked like more supermarkets and shopping centers. The few remaining scenes with vaulting canopies of trees and houses with personalities like human beings, soon looked uncomfortable and apologetic.”

— Eric Sloane, *Our Vanishing Landscape* - 1955

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# CALEB'S CORNER

For the second year in a row I've had the pleasure along with our crew and a few members of FOB to participate as leaders/instructors in Matt Light's Timber Framing and leadership camp. Held at the beautiful Chenoweth Trails outside of Greenville, Ohio, we spent three full days teaching 19 teenagers the basics of timber framing, hand tool usage, and teamwork.

While at last year's camp Matt shared with us his idea for a timber framed barn in the trees, which he had been laying the groundwork for over the last six years. Many of us shared in his enthusiasm for the idea, but as the year between camps progressed it became clear that he was going to make his idea a reality. Matt possesses the unique ability to think with the big picture in mind, then make it a reality. Those of us who are privileged enough to be encompassed into his vision easily feed from his enthusiasm and love the journey to completion.

By no means was the goal of this camp to turn these teenagers into timber framers, but exposing them to hand tool usage and the basics of traditional joinery lays the groundwork for looking at the building process with different eyes. Personally, I love the challenge of teaching young adults the steps of lay-



**Timber frame in the trees.**  
Image by: Matt Light

out, cutting/chopping joinery, and fitting together what started out as blank timbers. A secondary benefit of being an instructor is the personal growth we instructors receive by forcing ourselves to breakdown and explain the often second-nature actions that we do each day.

A true testament to the impact of what we started last year was seven of the 13 kids from last year's camp returned this year. Of those seven in particular were two young women, who are rock stars! As soon as the initial layout was complete and work began, these two young women were the ones we re-

lied upon to assist us in the layout and cutting of the subsequent steps in order to keep the build moving along.

Not to be discouraged by torrential rains that arrived the third morning (raising day), the entire camp took the last bit of energy after an exhausting few days, and completed the resurrection of the frame. The importance of the participants seeing the process through start to finish was the one of the goals we as instructors had, and everyone came through with a true team effort to make that a reality!

Caleb Miller, President FOB



**Matt Light's Timber Frame and Leadership Camp participants and FOB members at Chenoweth Trails in Darke County.**  
Photo by: Susie Light

# Floor Framing in Ohio Forebay Barns: 1820 – 1920

Forebay is the name given to barns which have a section of the main floor area cantilevered beyond the perimeter of the ground floor walls. In most cases this overhang is part of the floor framing beneath the eaves or "aisle" wall on the side opposite the "bank". In a few examples the forebay is on the gable end.

The true origin and original purpose of the forebay type barn are both subjects for conjecture, however a study of forebay barns still in use seems to make its purpose quite clear. In both the early "Sweitzer" type (asymmetrical bents with ridge centered over ground floor walls) and the more recent "Pennsylvania" type (symmetrical bents with ridge centered over main floor walls) the forebay overhangs the wall on the ground floor which contains the stall walls. The stable front wall is the working side of the ground floor of the barn. Since it is often necessary to open and close the stable doors (either full or half) during inclement weather, the forebay creates a sheltered space in which to work. The overhang also does a good job of keeping the rain and snow out of the stables and manger.

Framing the forebay was a challenge to the timber framer. The "sill" plate of the forebay wall had no sill upon which to bear.

The solution to this problem generally falls within three types:

Type I "Stacked" The plate rests on top of the extended floor joists.

Type II "Lapped" The plate is half lapped into the joists.

Type III "Mortice & Tenon" The plate is soffit tenoned onto the joists.

The types are shown in relative chronological order although a great deal of overlap is apparent.

Placing the forebay plate directly on top of the mow joist extensions appears to be the earliest framing type and may be a carryover from log wall barn framing. Many examples of this type exist throughout the Ohio agriscap. In some cases, the mow joists are half round (hewn two

sides) from the bank sill to the forebay sill. In others the joists are half round until they reach the stable front wall and hewn square (sometimes tapered) from there to the forebay sill. In another variation the bent "sleepers" are square sill to sill while the mow joists aren't.

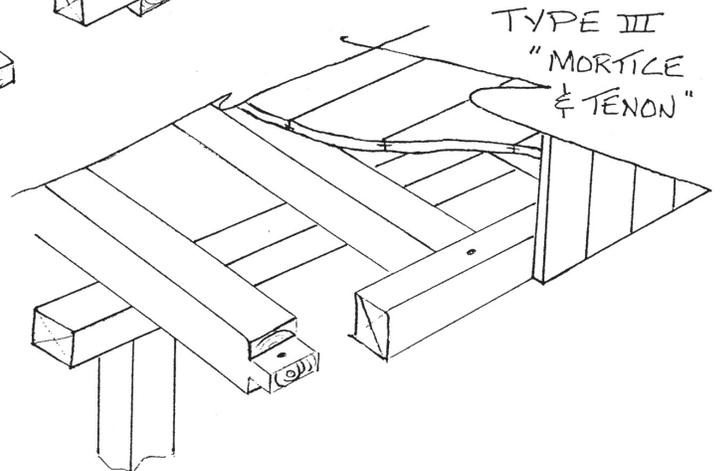
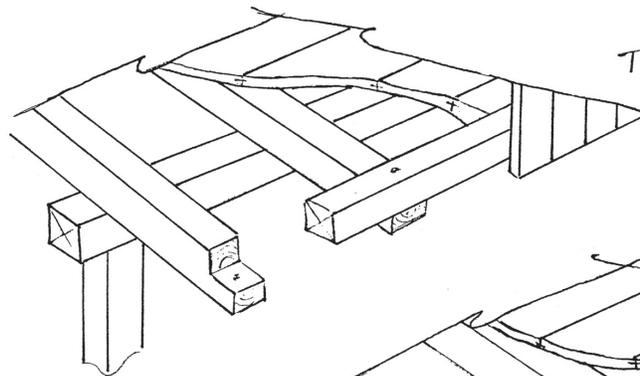
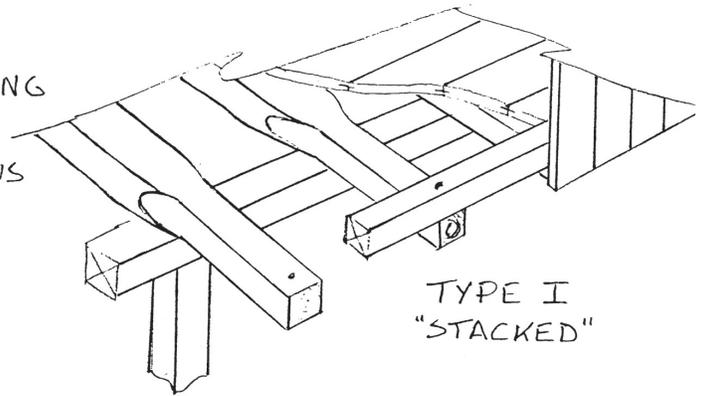
Lapping the sill into the joist appears to be a transitional technique intended to improve on the earlier method. This modification partially solved two problems inherent to type I. In stacked wall framing the sill beam created an obstruction at floor level when full height "threshing doors" were incorporated in the forebay wall. By lowering the sill onto the joists the obstruction was nearly illuminated. Another advantage was the protection of half of the exposed end grain of the mow joists. In many examples of Type I forebay framing the exposed end grain of the mow joists created a disastrous situation that

required difficult and expansive repairs to rotted floor systems.

Fully mortice and tenoned forebay sill would appear to be the last improvement in forebay floor framing. This system completely removes the sill from the mail floor as well as fully protecting the end grain of the mow joists. In many cases the mow joists and sleepers are hewn square and all soffit tenoned into the sill. In some very recent examples, the sleepers are large hewn timbers and the common joists are sawn "3x's" which are lapped into the sill very much like residential framing of the same period.

An interesting side note to this study of forebay plate framing is the introduction of the "granary girt". A number of examples exist (mostly Type II & III) in which a bearing girt is incorporated into

SILL  
PLATE FRAMING  
IN OHIO  
FOREBAY BARNs  
1820-1920



# Tired Old I-house

This old place in Morgan County, Ohio has seen more vibrant and robust days. This swayback house and barn is what remains of an old Southern farm. The barn at the right has no side entries, only access at the gable end. The house is a Southern I-house. It is called an I-house because of their very common appearance in the I-states — Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa — so named in the 1930s by Fred Kniffen, a cultural geographer at Louisiana State University who was a specialist in folk architecture. That does not mean that they originated there or that they are only found there. It became a popular house form in the Mid Atlantic and the Southern states very early on.

The I-houses are distinguished by their floor plan. I-houses generally feature gables to the side or ends and are at least two rooms in length, one room deep, and two full stories in height. They also often have a rear wing or ell addition for a kitchen or additional space. This I-house, however, has a shed roof addition that runs the length at the rear. The facade of an I-house tends to be symmetrical, with the door



Image: Tom O'Grady

in the center. They were constructed in a variety of materials, including logs, wood frame, brick, or stone.

The Northern I-house has the same general floor plan but with a single central chimney. The central chimney allows the heat to be captured from all sides of the masonry mass. The Southern I-house has a chimney at each end. Southern I-houses in northern states have the chimney on the end walls but inside the wall capturing some of the masonry's radiant heat. The Southern I-houses in Southern states have chimneys at both ends but attached to the exterior of the house. The exterior chimneys were less likely to overheat the house on the cooler southern evenings.

Morgan County, like many of the counties making up the Ohio Company Purchase and adjacent early subdivisions in Southeast Ohio, are typified by New England farms and barns or Southern farms and barns. There are no Pennsylvania German barns in Washington, Morgan, Athens, Meigs, Noble, Vinton, Jackson, or Gallia counties. The Ohio Company, from Boston, Massachusetts, established Marietta, Ohio's first organized settlement. Other early settlers crossed the Ohio River from Virginia and Kentucky. These two cultures dominated the architecture in the rural landscape and many of the small towns of the Ohio Company Purchase.

By: Tom O'Grady

## How Farming Was Done in mid-19th Century Ohio

"...In getting his ground plowed and planted, a man worked alone, but harvest brought neighbors together. For some years the wheat farmers of Champaign County held "cradling bees." Gathered in a ripe field they marched through the golden grain, swinging their scythes in time to a leader's song. The cradle, a kind of basket frame attached to the scythe blade, caught and held the severed grain before laying it in swaths on the stubble. At the end of a round, under a tree, a bucket of water or a jug of whiskey refreshed the reapers. A hazard of harvest was the copperhead, coiled under the swaths of grain or even in the bound sheaves. Hogs, the natural enemy of all snakes, followed the harvest, devouring copperheads with relish. When a porker found a snake, he soon had one end in

his mouth and the other under a forefoot. According to William Cooper Howells, the father of Ohio's foremost writer, hogs were active, enterprising, and self-reliant. All they asked was a free range of fields and woods.

The threshing of grain waited until winter, when work had ended in the fields. In a day's work a good man with a flail could beat out ten bushels of wheat on the hard clay floor of his barn. It took all winter to thresh the grain of a ten acre field, but the work was shortened when horses were used. A team of horses, tramping circles on the barn floor, could thresh 25 bushels in a day. The next step was to farm machines, which came into use in mid-nineteenth-century Ohio."

Walter Havinghurst, from: *Ohio – A Bicentennial History*, 1976

### FRAMING, Continued from Page 4

the floor framing between the sleepers of the bents on either side of the granary. The floor joists under the granary are soffit tenoned into the girt and continue out to the forebay sill. This girt also accepts the vertical framing in the wall separating the grain room from the hay mow. This advantage to the loads it must endure are independent of the hay mow. The ability to create a tightly fitted ("rodent proof") floor to wall joint is also simplified.

Many mourn the ongoing degradation of the American agriscap. The short-sighted cost effective contrivances common to our new age architecture belie the foresight of the men and women who created the structural strongholds which still stand as monuments to their own unselfish motivations. Oh, that we could at least follow in their footsteps even knowing that we could not fill their shoes.

By: Rudy Christian

# Springhouses - Early American Refrigeration

The springhouse is an iconic farm building that has all but disappeared from the landscape. Usually a single room, constructed over a spring, the original purpose of a springhouse was to keep the spring water clean by excluding fallen leaves, animals, and other potential contaminants to the fresh water source. The enclosing structure was also found to be useful as an elegant and efficient form of refrigeration to keep fresh produce and dairy products. The moderation of air temperature helped keep food cool in the summer and from freezing in the wintertime. The advent of ice delivery, and, later, rural electrification and refrigerators proved to be more convenient for the farmer.

Springhouses were usually among the first structures made on a farmstead in the early days as water was the primary requisite for people and animals. And they were the storing place for milk and cider.

A little research and a glance at images of old springhouses shows how beautiful such a simple structure can be. Nestled on their own, usually away from other farm-buildings, one may not even know what their purpose is if the springwater is not visible.

The springhouse was generally a small building erected over or just downhill from a groundwater spring that allowed the cool water (usually around 55°F) to flow into the building and moderate its interior temperature. Locating it in the woods or under a shade tree helped to keep the structure cooler. Thick walls, recessed windows, and large overhanging eaves also helped.

Springhouses were often constructed into a hillside so fieldstone or cut stone blocks were the materials of choice because they were readily available and would not readily decay. A second story was sometimes added and these could also be built of stone or be framed with wood. The springhouse usually had gable ends of stone or wood and a wood-framed roof.

Once inside the springhouse, water could be diverted to flow around several walls before it exited the building at the other end. Shelving was built about three feet above the water to hold produce and other perishables. Crocks and jars holding liquids could be placed directly into the water.

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Photo by: Tom O'Grady

**This springhouse on Ohio State Park land in Athens County begs for restoration. The historically robust spring continues to flow strong more than a century and a half after the spring house was built.**



Photo by: Tom O'Grady

**Springhouse with an upstairs storage space. The spring was captured higher on the hill, now on the upper side of the road (see guardrail). Another Athens County springhouse that has stood the test of time and is in need of some TLC.**

# Ohio Barns...really?

Likely not made of native Ohio materials. While they all have a gambrel roof, they probably weren't pushed up from a gable roof to accommodate more hay storage. Obviously won't hold more than a few bales of hay. Probably not even timber framed — no mortise and tenon joinery. Almost certainly not made with scribe rule joinery with marriage marks. Little chance of any broad axe or adze marks. Not likely to see any pit saw or sash saw markings. Probably not even any circular saw marks. Bet you won't find any canted queen-posts or under-squinted scarf joints with a wedge. Probably no waste wall. No wind doors. No wind braces. Probably very little bracing at all. Don't suppose there are any built-in ladders to access upper spaces in these barns. Doubt there is a threshing floor. Bet there are no tally marks. There's no side entry so they can't be New England or Pennsylvania German barns. Definitely no overhanging forebay.



Image and comments by: Tom O'Grady

## Where's the barn?

No pent roofs. Other than the gable end entry there is so other evidence that they might be Southern barns. No hayhood. There are no owl holes. Not too many traditional features at all. And, so many barns so close together!

They sure don't build Ohio barns the way they used to.

## SPRINGHOUSES, Continued from Page 6

One writer said that springhouses "... were so common to our colonial ancestors that little mention is made of them in early documents. Most of the evidence collected about springhouses comes from buildings that still exist today." Like old barns and other historic structures, once the original need has been met by other means, and if not repurposed, the building may fall into disrepair. Many fine springhouses have been lost because of this, making those that remain more valuable as links to our past and as educational tools.

Two springhouses in Athens County are no longer utilized, but are worthy of restoration. One is on property owned by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and served as the springhouse for the historic Linscott Farm, now a part of Strouds Run State Park. Another is situated on conservancy land near the same park. The spring was developed higher on the hill and piped down into the springhouse. Many years later the County rerouted the road to higher ground between the place where the spring was developed and the springhouse. Now the water is piped beneath the county road but the springhouse, although long abandoned is still functioning — a sign of an originally well-built system.

A fine example of a springhouse still in use is at Malabar Inn. The 1828 brick farmhouse was acquired by writer Louis Bromfield when he was developing his ideas about sustainable farming at his nearby Malabar Farm in the 1940s. The old springhouse on the farmstead had been still in service as rural electrification was relatively new in



The springhouse (upper right) and produce stand (center) at Ohio's Malabar Inn (rear left). From: [www.richlandsource.com/area\\_history/then-now-malabar-farm-roadside-produce-stand/](http://www.richlandsource.com/area_history/then-now-malabar-farm-roadside-produce-stand/)

America in that decade. Bromfield had a roadside fruit and vegetable stand built next to the historic farmhouse. It was designed such that water from the spring, which was developed in the rock bluff up behind the house, then flowed into and through the springhouse and out to the fruit stand. The water was directed through courses above and between the fruits and vegetables splashing a spray onto the displayed produce keeping it moist. The water flowed from the roadside stand, beneath the road and into a large pond before draining into nearby Switzer Creek.

A total of 20 springhouses are listed on the National Register of Historic Places in the United States. These include spring-

houses in 11 different states and in Washington DC. Two listings are in Ohio, the Anson Davis Springhouse in Franklin County (circa 1850) and the John Lebol House (smokehouse and springhouse) in Tuscarawas County (1857, 1859).

When you're passing through farm country and notice a little stone building off by its lonesome, look for evidence of a spring flowing in or out. It may have served as a farm family's refrigerator in the days before electricity. Springhouses are a reminder of a simpler era and how ingenuity satisfied an important need without burning fossil fuels.

By: Bob Eichenberg - FOB member,  
Athens County



The hayhood and a gable-end entry on this Pickaway County barn are features common to Southern barns. A pent roof on the facing side and a shed roof addition on the far side are typical additions on any old barns. Southern style barns can be found throughout Ohio but are abundant in the Virginia Military District between the Scioto and Little Miami rivers and in other southern Ohio counties. Fewer Southern barns are found the further north one goes in Ohio.  
Photo by: Tom O'Grady

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