NPS Form 10-900 **United States Department of the Interior** National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: <u>Seabiscuit's Stud Barn</u> Other names/site number:



Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

2. Location

Street & number: <u>16200 N. Hwy 101</u>	
City or town: Willits State: CA	_ County: _Mendocino
Not For Publication: Vicinity:	

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this _____ nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

____national _____statewide ____local Applicable National Register Criteria:

__A __B __C __D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets	does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date	
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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Seabiscuit's Stud Barn

Name of Property

Mendocino County, CA County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ____ entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- ____ determined not eligible for the National Register
- ____ removed from the National Register
- ____ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.) Private: Х

Public – Local

Public – State

Public -	Federal

;	– Federal	

Category of Property

(Check	only	one	box.)
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Building(s)	х
District	
Site	
Structure	
Object	

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing <u>1</u>	Noncontributing 0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

6. Function or Use Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

Category: Agriculture/Subsistence Category: Recreation and Culture Subcategory: Animal Facility Subcategory: Outdoor recreation

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Category: Recreation and Culture

Subcategory: Museum

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Seabiscuit's Stud Barn Name of Property Mendocino County, CA County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

No style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.) Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: Concrete Roof: Shingle Walls: Redwood board and batten

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

This barn was constructed specifically for Seabiscuit by Charles S. Howard at Ridgewood Ranch in 1939-1940. The Stud Barn is a square plan, pyramidal composition shingle roof, wood frame building clad with red board and batten siding and white, flat-sawn window and door trim. A small ventilation cupola tops the building. Two pairs of glazed barn doors provide access to the interior from the east and west sides of the building. A small gable roof marks the primary entrance. The interior consists of a first floor split into four stalls, one in each corner, with two tack rooms between the stalls on the north and south sides. A hay loft / living space occupy the area above the first floor and are accessed by a wood pull-down stair. Each of the corner stalls has a rounded corner where its two interior walls meet. This corner is covered with bead board wainscot above, which is an iron grill that provides visual access to the stalls' interiors. The building was cosmetically restored in 2004.

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Narrative Description (continued)

Each stall in the Stud Barn has a wood Dutch door that opens to the central east-west corridor. These doors are painted with the Howard racing emblem on the interior side of the upper portion of the door. A second Dutch door in the exterior wall of each stable once provided access to paddocks that surrounded the building. Currently these doors remain locked and open only onto parking lots or grassy areas between adjacent buildings. The interior of the barn has horizontal flat sawn board wall finishes, an unfinished wood floor and exposed ceiling framing. Twelve-and eight-lite wood hopper windows provide natural lighting to the interior spaces. A skylight in the roof lights the attic space. The tack rooms are accessed by wood five-panel doors.

This barn was constructed specifically for Seabiscuit by Howard in 1939-1940 during a period recovery. After retirement, this was Seabiscuit's primary home and was much visited by fans and admirers. A series of four large paddocks originally surrounded the building, each accessed by one of the four stalls in the Stud Barn. The barn was rehabilitated in 2003-2004 with help from the Willits Rotary Club. At this time, a new roof was installed and the interior, which had been converted to a print shop (set-up and used by the Church) was restored back to its original configuration as a stable.

Photographic documentation and oral histories were used to corroborate physical evidence uncovered during selective demolition and reconstruction to inform the recreation of some interior elements – particularly the rounded stall corners. On the exterior, the walls received a fresh coat of red paint and the trim was painted white. Several artifacts from the Howard-era remain at the Stud Barn. These include the two red and white lawn jockey figurines and the horse-and-rider weathervane on the roof.¹

Overall, this building retains a high degree of integrity. Roof and wall material replacement were done in-kind, and reconstruction of the building interior was done via consultation with individuals who had seen and used the interior of the barn, reflecting integrity of design, materials and workmanship. Location, setting, feeling and association have been maintained. The repairs made in 2002 followed the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Restoration. The building functions as the central component of an interpretive program discussing Charles Howard, his period of ownership, and the horse, Seabiscuit.²

¹ State of California Department of Parks and Recreation Primary Record Ridgewood Ranch Resource #6 Stud Barn, 2007

² Urbano, Becky, *Ridgewood Ranch Core Historic Structures Report: Stud Barn*, Garavaglia Architecture, Inc., 2007

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Seabiscuit's Stud Barn Name of Property Mendocino County, CA County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- X

Х

- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- X
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Seabiscuit's Stud Barn

Name of Property **Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions.)

Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance 1940-1947

Significant Dates 1940 (Seabiscuit moves to barn) 1947 (Seabiscuit dies)

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Unknown

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Seabiscuit's stud barn is eligible under National Register Criterion A at the local level of significance in the area Entertainment/Recreation for its association with the champion racehorse Seabiscuit and his owner, Charles S. Howard. The period of significance begins when construction was completed in 1940 to the date of Seabiscuit's death at age 14 in 1947. The property is owned by a religious organization but meets the requirements of Criteria Consideration A because the property is significant for its association with events that occurred prior to the property's acquisition by a religious organization.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

(See Continuation Sheet)

Mendocino County, CA County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.) Hillenbrand, Laura, *Seabiscuit, An American Legend*, Random House, 2001

Nichols, William, Seabiscuit, The Rest of the Story, Tate Publishing, 2007

- Preservation Nation, National Trust for Historic Preservation *Ridgewood Ranch, Home of Seabiscuit*, 11 Most Endangered Places Listing, 2004 <u>http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/11-most-</u> <u>endangered/locations/ridgewood-ranch-home-of-seabiscuit.html</u>
- Kozel, Gary, Seabiscuit Statue Officially Unveiled, Dedicated at Ridgewood Ranch, Home of the Legendary Racehorse in Willits, CA, Seabiscuit Heritage Foundation, 2007 <u>http://www.seabiscuitheritage.org/press_releases-2007-07-11.html</u>
- State of California Department of Parks and Recreation Primary Record Ridgewood Ranch Resource #6 Stud Barn, 2007
- Urbano, Becky, *Ridgewood Ranch Core Historic Structures Report: Stud Barn* Garavaglia Architecture, Inc., 2007

Hon. Mike Thompson of California, *Commemorating Seabiscuit at Ridgewood Ranch* House of Representatives Congressional Record, 2009

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- _____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- _____ previously listed in the National Register
- _____previously determined eligible by the National Register
- _____designated a National Historic Landmark
- _____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
- _____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #_____
- _____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #_____

Primary location of additional data:

- _____ State Historic Preservation Office
- ____Other State agency
- Federal agency
- _____Local government
- _____ University

X_Other:

Name of repository: <u>State of California Department of Parks&Recreation Primary Record</u> **Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** <u>#6</u> United States Department of the Interior National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

Seabiscuit's Stud Barn Name of Property Mendocino County, CA County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property <u>0.05739 acres (2,500 sq. ft)</u>

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84:______(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 39°19'11.82''N	Longitude: 123°18'29.44''W
2. Latitude:	Longitude:
3. Latitude:	Longitude:
4. Latitude:	Longitude:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

A small parcel immediately encompassing the footprint of Seabiscuit's stud barn and its setting. An area of 50'x50' (2,500 sq. ft.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary of the nominated property is shown as the dotted line on the accompanying map entitled: Laughlin Range, CA (1991).

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: <u>Jacqueline Cooper, Consulta</u>	ant	
organization:Seabiscuit Heritage Found	dation	
street & number: <u>16200 N. Hwy 101</u>		
city or town: <u>Willits</u>	state: <u>Ca</u>	zip code: <u>_95490</u>
e-mailseabiscuit@instawave.net)301_0084 (direct)	
date: <u>April 30, 2013</u>		

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

• Additional items: (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.) Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Seabiscuit's Stud Barn at Ridgewood Ranch City or Vicinity: Willits County: Mendocino State: CA Photographer: Maureen Moore Date Photographed: April 22, 2013

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Seabiscuit's Stud Barn

Name of Property

Mendocino County, CA County and State

- 1 of 10 Seabiscuit's Stud barn nomination photo primary façade, facing west 8"x10" (Photo #1)
- 2 of 10 Primary façade, facing west (Photo #2)
- 3 of 10 Seondary façade with rear door, facing east (Photo #3)
- 4 of 10 Seondary façade with stall window, facing north (Photo #4)
- 5 of 10 Seondary façade with dutch door, facing south (Photo #5)
- 6 of 10 Primary entrance with lawn jockeys, facing west (Photo #6)
- 7 of 10 Interior, facing west (Photo #7)
- 8 of 10 Interior, reconstructed curved stall corner (Photo #8)
- 9 of 10 Groom's quarters, facing south (Photo #9)
- 10 of 10 Horse-and-rider weathervane (Photo #10)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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(Continued)

Criterion A: Entertainment/Recreation—

Seabiscuit's Stud Barn is eligible under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/Recreation as the "retirement home" of Seabiscuit, a racehorse of international reputation, and a site where racing fans came to visit the horse in his retirement years. While the races that won Seabiscuit his reputation had already occurred, the Stud Barn became a tourist attraction that drew thousands to this remote ranch in Mendocino County, thus gaining significance in its own right as a roadside attraction associated with one of the best-known horses in American horse racing history. The facility was also a working ranch and stud barn.

As the world's leading money winner of his time Seabiscuit enjoyed celebrity, attracting thousands of horse racing enthusiasts to his final home during his retirement years. Although racehorse owner Charles Howard purchased the property as a cattle ranch and country home in 1921, he transformed it into a Thoroughbred breeding facility unparalleled in the state. Among other facilities Howard constructed the stud barn to accommodate his new operation. The fact that it became Seabiscuit's final home makes it unique, adding with historical significance relating to horse racing's heyday of the 1930's and 40's. After Seabiscuit's blaze-of-glory finish at Santa Anita Park and retirement at the ranch, the stud barn was completed within view of the family home. Over the next seven years until his death, Seabiscuit and his stud barn became a tourist attraction like no other. Charles and his wife Marcella accommodated the horse's dedicated fans with regular visiting hours. More than 5,000 visitors signed the guest book at the stud barn during the horse's retirement years.

Ridgewood Ranch is a prime example of a traditional California ranching enterprise. Its natural setting and unity of architecture clearly communicate the 1940s ranching typology. Its association with the famous racehorse, Seabiscuit, and his owner, Charles Howard, and early California notable figure, William Van Arsdale provide additional historical merit to the property. Ridgewood Ranch is the final resting place of Seabiscuit and served as his home during the critical periods of his recuperation and retirement. Howard is largely responsible for the current appearance and arrangement of the property. Van Arsdale constructed much of the early systems on the property, including a gravity-fed Pelton water wheel that remains functional today. It is a property that was well known to travelers through the area as a stop on early stagecoach and automobile routes. Vestiges of these early routes remain in the landscape.

The Stud Barn was constructed by Howard in 1939-1940 to house his prized racehorse, Seabiscuit, after winning the 1940 Santa Anita Handicap. This is where Seabiscuit spent his retirement years and where fans came to see him and take pictures. The building has four stalls in each of the four corners of the interior. Each stall once opened into a separate pasture area where the present-day church building is constructed. Over the years, it served as a storage facility and a printing office before being rehabilitated and opened to the public ca.2002. It is the most well-known of the ranch buildings and features in many photographs of Seabiscuit taken on the property. It is the one building built specifically for the horse and the only one directly associated with him apart from the larger horse farm.

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Seabiscuit retired to Ridgewood April 10, 1940 after a record number of people attended an American horse race on March 2nd and watched as Red Pollard rides Seabiscuit to a come-from-behind victory in his third attempt at the \$100,000 Santa Anita Handicap. He clocks the fastest mile-and-a quarter in Santa Anita's history, the second fastest ever run America. ¹Howard built a stud barn for the retiring hero within view of the family home. During the next seven years it became a tourist attraction like none other. Over 5,000 visitors signed the guest book at the stud barn during his retirement years. This site was known as a great date spot in the 1940's.²

Nestled among oak and redwood-studded hillsides, Northern California's Ridgewood Ranch was the home and is the final resting place of a great American horseracing legend, Seabiscuit. Located in rural Mendocino County, between the towns of Ukiah and Willits, Ridgewood Ranch comprises 4,600 acres of working farmland, forests, streams, and redwoods and a 90-acre central area featuring more than 25 historic structures associated with owners William Van Arsdale (1903-1909) and Charles S. Howard (1921-1951), Seabiscuit's owner. The diverse cultural resources at Ridgewood Ranch include over two-dozen buildings and man-made features such as trails, bridges, a gravity-fed Pelton water wheel and reservoir, a 19th Century stagecoach road and cemetery, and a railway station, as well as vestiges of Native American habitation.

These elements all exist in the context of the overarching 5,000-acre ranch and woodland property. Over time, Howard transformed the one-time cattle ranch into a thoroughbred horse facility unparalleled in California. It was here in the Walker Valley that an improbable winning trio - owner Howard, jockey Red Pollard and trainer Tom Smith - nursed an ailing racehorse back to health in 1939 after a serious injury. Seabiscuit's recuperation at the ranch set into motion events that culminated in his electrifying, third-try, blaze-of-glory finish at Santa Anita Racetrack in 1940. Depression-era America was enthralled; the unassuming brown horse's unexpected winning streak seemed to reflect the fragile hopes and indomitability of a nation subdued by adversity. Laura Hillenbrand's book Seabiscuit: An American Legend (2001), and the later Academy Award-nominated movie based upon it, have introduced new generations to the inspirational tale.³

Still a working ranch, Ridgewood has been designated as among 11 of America's most threatened historic places by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 2004. The current owner, the Golden Rule Church Association, has endeavored to be a model steward of the ranch by keeping developers at bay and by permanently protecting historic structures that constitute Seabiscuit's legacy.

³ Preservation Nation, National Trust for Historic Preservation *Ridgewood Ranch, Home of Seabiscuit*, 11 Most Endangered Places Listing, 2004 <u>http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/11-most-endangered/locations/ridgewood-</u> <u>ranch-home-of-seabiscuit.html</u>

¹ Hillenbrand, Laura, Seabiscuit, An American Legend, Random House, 2001

² Nichols, William, Seabiscuit, The Rest of the Story, Tate Publishing, 2007

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The church has worked toward restoring several historic buildings, including the rehabilitation of Seabiscuit's stud barn, and has joined the Seabiscuit Heritage Foundation, the National Trust and others to develop a preservation and resource management plan.⁴

In 2009 the United States Postal Service released a commemorative stamped envelope featuring Seabiscuit's 1938 victory in the match race against Triple Crown winner War Admiral. An official USPS first day of sale ceremony was held at Ridgewood Ranch with key note speakers Joan Mondale, and former Vice President Walter Mondale in attendance.⁵

⁴ Kozel, Gary, Seabiscuit Statue Officially Unveiled, Dedicated at Ridgewood Ranch, Home of the Legendary Racehorse in Willits, CA, Seabiscuit Heritage Foundation, 2007 <u>http://www.seabiscuitheritage.org/press_releases-2007-07-11.html</u>

⁵ Hon. Mike Thompson of California, *Commemorating Seabiscuit at Ridgewood Ranch* House of Representatives Congressional Record, 2009

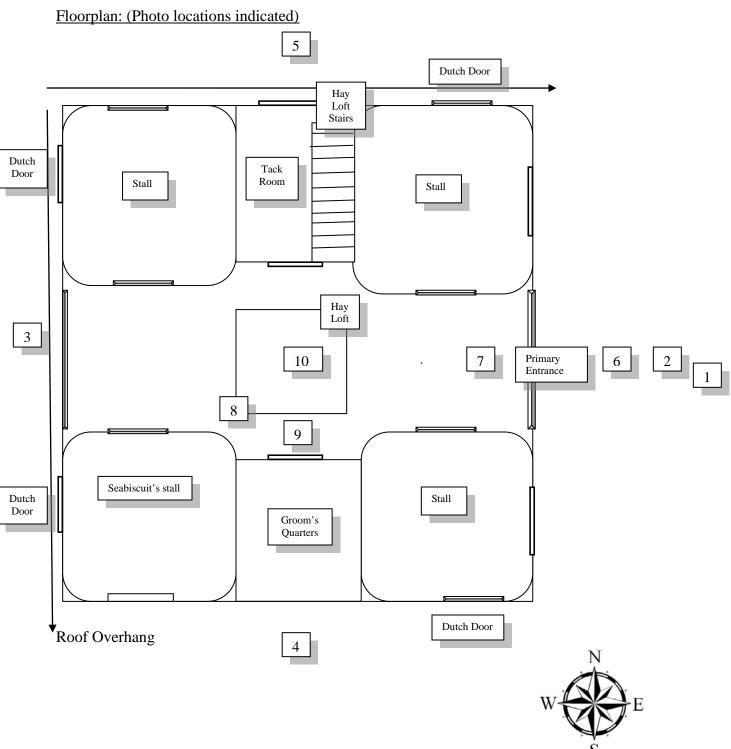
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Seabiscuit's Stud Barn, Ridgewood Ranch, Willits, California

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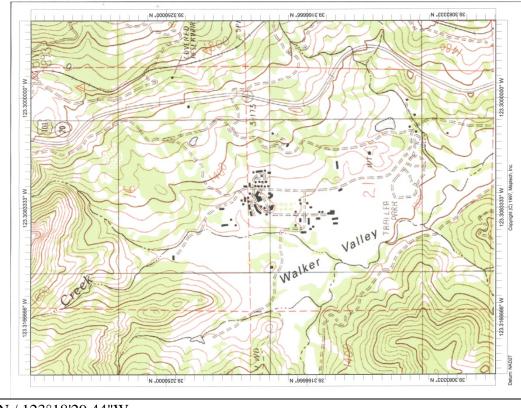
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Laughlin Range Quadrangle Mendocino County, California (Revised 1991)





Topographical Map

39°19'11.82"N / 123°18'29.44"W

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Historic Photographs

- 1 of 2 Seabiscuit's Stud Barn, Ridgewood Ranch Willits, California (ca. 1940) (Photo #1)
- 2 of 2 Seabiscuit and Charles S. Howard (ca. 1940) (Photo #2)





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