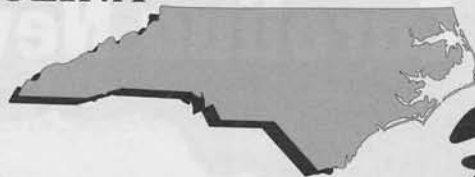


NORTH CAROLINA



Books

Dorothy Hodder, Compiler

Phyllis Whitney's latest book, her 37th, is set in the North Carolina mountains, and involves a movie set left over from the filming of *The Last of the Mohicans*. Lauren Castle has come to Lake Lure, drawn there by an anonymous note. Two years earlier, her husband had died in an accident while filming a documentary. Now someone thinks his death might not have been accidental.

Unbeknownst to most of the village's residents, Lauren is the granddaughter of early movie stars Victoria Frazer and Roger Brandt. While filming in Lake Lure the two had an affair, Lauren's mother was born and shipped off to California, Roger and his wronged wife settled in Lake Lure, and shortly thereafter Victoria drowned herself in the lake.

Whitney, Phyllis A.

Star Flight.

New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1993. 286 pp.
\$20.00. ISBN 0-517-59499-4.

This is the setting into which Lauren arrives, ready to shake up the lives of everyone involved and to find out what *really* happened, and how it all might be connected to her husband's death. There's also the small matter of Gordon Heath, Lauren's old boyfriend. Will they reunite? Did Victoria really drown? All is revealed in an entertaining, although somewhat unbelievable,

story. The location in the North Carolina mountains creates an interesting atmosphere for the story, which carries the reader along despite some strange, and superfluous, subplots (UFOs are involved). Suitable for public libraries.

— Janet Sinder

Duke University Law Library

On his way to see his girlfriend May, Jimmy Madden's life took a tragic turn for the worse when the pharmacist closed his shop five minutes early. The marriage and baby that followed that fateful day in rural 1950s North Carolina form the story of David Payne's third novel, *Ruin Creek*. Writing alternately in the voices of Jimmy, his wife May, and their older son Joey, Payne weaves the painful story of this family's struggle to overcome the obstacles to personal and familial happiness that have developed throughout May and Jimmy's eleven-year marriage.

David Payne.

Ruin Creek.

New York: Doubleday,
1993. 373pp. \$22.50.
ISBN 0-385-26418-6.

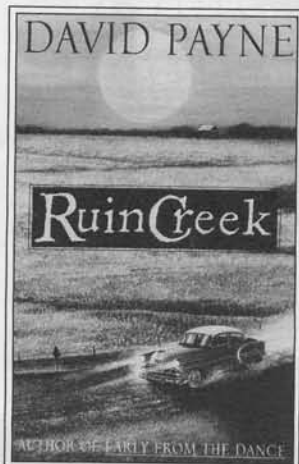
Payne's evocative narrative draws the reader into the characters' lives through his native sense of North Carolina's rural and coastal traditions. May is unable to reconcile her disappointment in her husband's failure to be the person she wants him to be, while Jimmy resents the external forces he has allowed to shape his life. May's and Jimmy's characters are developed carefully throughout the book so that the reader must reluctantly concur with their decisions in the end. Joey's voice is a potent call for reason in his

young life, and Pa Tilley is there to provide the reassurance Joey's parents are not capable of giving him.

David Payne is also the author of *Early From the Dance* and *Confessions of a Taoist on Wall Street*, which won the 1984 Houghton Mifflin Literacy Fellowship Award. *Ruin Creek* is highly recommended for public and school libraries.

— Eileen McCluskey Papile

Cumberland County Public Library and Information Center



Surely the mark of a good writer is an ability to write about anything, even, say, a wall, which is precisely the subject matter Richard Maschal chose for his first book, *Wet-Wall Tattoos*. Maschal's wall is real and his story true; though a work of nonfiction, it has the surprising capability of bringing to mind the visceral excitement of artist Gulley Jimson's final encounter with a wall in Joyce Cary's novel *The Horse's Mouth*. Focusing on the altar wall mural of St. Peter's Church in downtown Charlotte, *Wet-Wall Tattoos* follows the collaborative conception and creation of a painted Biblical narrative, rising over two stories in height, executed in the time-honored technique of buon fresco by North Carolina artist Ben Long and his team of seven craftsmen. Through the ambient rhythmic turns of the mullers grinding pigment, trowels smoothing plaster, and the very presence of the wall,

Maschal tells an intimate story of a talented artist and his apprentices at work following techniques and processes little changed from those of fifteenth-century Renaissance Italy. The author gracefully moves from the progressions and human drama of the wall to a history of St. Peter's and southern Catholic migration; to early economic development in the Piedmont to a personal history of Ben Long; all in memorable illustration of the truth that the study of the human spirit as expressed in art naturally, even logically, invigorates interest in history, economics, and society. Maschal masterfully draws the inevitable stalemate between artist and client, (Long and Father Haughey, the Jesuit priest steering the project) in parallel to the problems Michelangelo and Pope Julius II

faced in the realization of the painting of the Sistine Chapel.

Wet-Wall Tattoos is indexed, carries a listing of source materials in the author's acknowledgments, and is supplemented by twenty-six black-and-white and ten color photographs. The work could have been improved by the inclusion of a bibliography.

Richard Maschal served for eight years as Art and Architecture Critic for *The Charlotte Observer*, and continues work there as feature writer. He has had articles published in *Architectural Record*, the *New York Times*, and *Southern Accents*. His honest eye for visual description, receptive ear for anecdote, susceptibility to romance, and over-active conscience regarding research make *Wet-Wall Tattoos* enjoyable, instructive reading for inclusion in secondary school, technical school, college, and ecclesiastical libraries.

—Anne Brennan
St. John's Museum of Art

Outsideers can learn what it was like to grow up in rural southeastern North Carolina from *Plankhouse*, a collaborative effort between poet Shelby Stephenson and photographer and sometime-North Carolinian Roger Manley. Those who did come of age in the area will find themselves nodding in agreement as they move through the book.

The concept is simple. Manley's photographs, many depicting old houses, empty fields, or people, occupy the even-numbered pages and are accompanied by short vignettes by Stephenson on the facing pages. The book is divided into six sections: Portraits, Whiskey, Farming, Meat, Fishing, and Hunting. Each section contains anywhere from three to thirteen short reminiscences, which range in length from one line to several paragraphs.

While the stories are often amusing (when a student is asked what an adverb is, he thinks it "could be the white part of a chicken manure"), they do not always fit the mood of the bleak black and white photographs. The format of the book is handsome and the photographs are memorable, but the rather formulaic vignettes are disconcertingly minimalist and disconnected. The reader may well wish for more developed storytelling, or poetry, from Stephenson. Recommended for North Carolina collections.

—Alan D. Cordle
New Hanover County Library

Richard Maschal.

***Wet-Wall Tattoos:
Ben Long and the Art of Fresco.***

Winston-Salem: John F. Blair Publisher, 1993. 212 pp.
\$25.95. ISBN: 0-89587-105-X.

Shelby Stephenson and Roger Manley.

Plankhouse.

Rocky Mount, NC: North Carolina Wesleyan College
Press, 1993. 79pp. \$29.95. ISBN 0-933-598-394.

After twenty years, Trevor McGee has returned to Missing Mile, North Carolina, and the house where his family lived and died. He's never understood why he didn't die, too, on the night his father killed his mother, his little brother, and, finally, himself. He's been tormented ever since by waking and sleeping nightmares of finding their bodies, but even worse is the anguish of not knowing if he was spared because his father loved him too much to kill him, or too little. Since he was five years old, he's had to wonder if artistic talent is all he has in common with his father, a famous underground cartoonist, or if the madness and violence that claimed his family lies in wait for him, too. He's avoided any closeness, any connection, that could make someone *his* victim. Until Zachary Bosch.

Poppy Z. Brite.

Draw Blood.

Delacorte, 1993. 373 pp. \$19.95. ISBN 0-385-30895-7

Zachary Bosch is a nineteen year old hacker on the run from the Feds. Chance (and *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*) has brought him to Missing Mile, and Trevor. Zach had his own problems growing up, and he relates to computers a lot better than he does to people. But something about Trevor seems to draw him and hold him, until he finds himself testing the redemptive power of

love in the haunted house Trevor calls Birdland.

Brite's first novel, *Lost Souls*, was about vampires, and both the cover art and the title of this one suggest a sequel. There are no vampires here, but Brite leads us down almost all the other avenues of dark fantasy with her evocative, sensual (and, at times, sexually explicit) prose. Don't look for Missing Mile on any map — you won't find it — but know that it, like Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County, is real in the pages of these two books, and in the imaginations of those who read them. Recommended for public libraries.

— Samantha Hunt

New Hanover County Public Library

Paul Buchanan took pictures for money. In North Carolina's rural mountain counties in the 1920s, wages were a dollar a day. Buchanan discovered that two days' work taking and delivering pictures could earn him \$20, so he did it. Carrying cameras handed down from his father, Buchanan traveled on foot, covering the back roads and isolated communities accessible from his home at Hawk in Mitchell County. In Avery, McDowell, Mitchell, and Yancey counties, he was The Picture Man.

Through the years of the Great Depression, Buchanan, who approached his work matter-of-factly, augmented other income with cash or bartered goods that he got for pictures. The "little room" (darkroom) where he developed negatives was lit by an old lantern with a colored shade, and he washed his negatives thoroughly in the branch running through the front yard. Families, Sunday School children, babies, mules, dogs, a nice litter of pigs with their smiling owner, and, occasionally, his own family posed for him. He worked out-of-doors without a flash. One week he would go out to "snap" the pictures, the next he would deliver the finished product and collect from fifty cents to a dollar for four prints, depending on the size; the largest pictures were five by seven inches. One day in 1951 he went out with seventy-five dollars worth of finished work, and when he came home that night, he had collected only seven dollars. "I thought, by George, I'd quit fooling with it," he said later. It was his last trip. Negatives stacked in cardboard boxes in the darkroom were ignored.

In 1977 Ann Hawthorne, a photographer then living in western North Carolina, found an anonymous note stuck behind one of her pictures in a show: "There's a man with old pictures of this area you

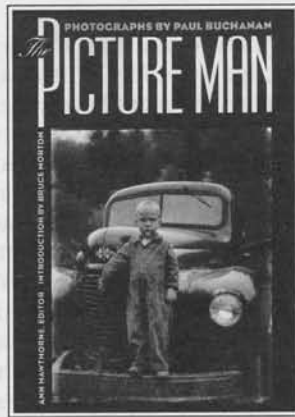
might want to meet, Paul Buchanan in Hawk." Hawthorne, who now works in Washington, DC, visited Buchanan; she won his confidence, and he let her take his negatives to clean and print. The images she found under decades of grime comprise her first book, *The Picture Man: Photographs by Paul Buchanan*. In assembling the 102 pictures in this small book (including four of Paul Buchanan by Ann Hawthorne), Hawthorne has succeeded in her goal of depicting these people of a narrowly circumscribed time and place as they themselves wanted to be seen. This is a genuine contribution, because these same people have been, at times, misrepresented, idealized, and romanticized. The pictures she chose are printed as contact prints, just as Paul Buchanan finished them originally for his customers.

Ann Hawthorne, editor.

The Picture Man:

Photographs by Paul Buchanan.

Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993.
126 pp. \$12.95 paperback, ISBN 0-8078-4431-4. \$24.95
hardcover, ISBN 0-8078-2119-5.



Transcriptions of recorded conversations between Hawthorne and Buchanan taped in 1985 augment the images; Buchanan tells stories of how he worked and of people he met.

As the story of Paul Buchanan and his work are told in the "Foreword" and "Introduction" (by Bruce Morton of CBS News) and in the "Preface" and "Interview" (by Hawthorne), repetition becomes a minor problem. "Notes on the Photographs" covers a scant two pages, and the reader wants to know more about the subjects and their lives; but Paul Buchanan knew the names and circumstances of few of his subjects. Only his own children, nieces, and grandparents are identified. Interestingly, Lick Log, one of his favorite stops, was home to a black community, and their portraits are well represented.

The Picture Man would be a useful addition to collections of North Caroliniana in public and academic libraries. The clear, nontechnical text could be appreciated by students in middle school or above, and the book would be good supplementary material for North Carolina history classes. The pictures themselves are most instructive, communicating much about a way of life very different from that of today even though it is not far removed in either time or distance.

The Picture Man is worth experiencing. Paul Buchanan did not think of himself as an artist or even as a photographer. His pictures pleased him when they looked "just like" the person. "If I did take them, they're good pictures. Good and plain."

— Sarah S. Robinson
Environmental Services, Jacksonville, Florida

Thomas Wolfe belongs to the halcyon days of American literature, the days when literary giants believed writing the Great American Novel was still possible. Morton Teicher's photo chronicle of Thomas Wolfe's life amply demonstrates this fact. Image after image of stately old buildings, dim small interiors, and staged group photographs solemnly seek to authenticate the legend of a man who literally towered over his fellows, whether at the private high school in Asheville, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, or Harvard.

The book reveals other things as well. The odd tidbits in the chronology at the end depict Wolfe as a man of gargantuan appetites and ambitions. Whether seducing Jean Harlowe, depositing an eight-foot high manuscript on his publisher's doorstep, or traversing two continents numerous times, Wolfe appears to have worked always on a vast scale, dealt always with epic themes. Only all of America could provide sufficient scope for his genius. Only an All-American son from the backwoods of North Carolina would attempt such a task. Only in America would an entire town expect it from him. And turn on him when their depiction in *Look Homeward Angel* proved less than flattering.

Wolfe was no angel. Nor devil, either. He remained always at the mercy of the people who instilled those lofty ambitions and desires. His affair with Aline Bernstein ended only when Wolfe's mother confronted her in Wolfe's apartment. Back on track, he worked five years on the mammoth four-volume *October Fair*. He returned to Asheville and became a backwoods famous-writer-in-residence until the pressure of friends and townsfolk drove him away. Suffering from ill health, he went West, the Mecca for American men searching for new beginnings, and contracted a misdiagnosed case of tuberculosis that led to his death.

A former president of the Thomas Wolfe Society, Teicher claims that Wolfe was developing greater artistic and emotional control of his work. Yet the soul searching in *Of Time and the River* neither focused his later prose nor enabled him to reject the personal boosterism he seems to have needed. His ability to use words to make the ordinary places and events illustrated in Teicher's book come alive could not resolve his creative anxieties and emotional conflicts. Both Wolfe the man and Wolfe the artist would have rejected the image of literary Titan that this photo album conveys. Rather than "one of the great writers of the twentieth century," Wolfe's assessment of his life's work might well be less mythical— one of unfulfilled promise. His expectations, and those of the people who influenced him, were too high. *Looking Homeward* offers only a glimpse of the wellsprings of Wolfe's creative power. Yet, in their dim, processional way these photographs testify to the inchoate vitality of his fiction while fabricating an American version of another myth — that of the prodigal son.

— William Fietzer
University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Morton I. Teicher.
***Looking Homeward:
A Thomas Wolfe Photo Album.***

Columbia: University of Missouri Press,
1993. xiv, 200 pp. \$29.95. ISBN 0-8262-0893-2.





Children are told at a young age that two brothers, Wilbur and Orville Wright, flew the first plane and did so in North Carolina—possibly North Carolina's greatest claim to fame. However, few rationalize the event beyond terse notation of acclaim. In his book, Parramore delves deep into the events and people, both local and national, that supported the Wrights' aeronautical adventures. He does touch on the Wrights themselves in brief biographical terms, but only to rationalize their development from tinkerers to aircraft manufacturers.

Thomas C. Parramore.

Triumph at Kitty Hawk: The Wright Brothers and Powered Flight.

Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1993. 124pp. \$8.00. ISBN 0-86526-259-4.

The real thrust of the work is to probe the "Tar Heels" of Kitty Hawk and the surrounding area and their relationships with the Wrights. Parramore contends that without the kindness and help of the Kitty Hawk's, the Wrights might not have succeeded; he makes a good case for this position by descriptive analysis of the turn-of-the-century Outer Banks — a remote, inaccessible place inhabited mainly by the descendants of shipwreck victims. He provides in-depth information on a panoply of characters who either directly or indirectly contributed to the first successful flight, from central players such as Bill Tate who was "an up and coming young man...better educated than most of his neighbors ...[he] had attended school for four years...", to obscure footnotes such as Tom Tate (nephew of Bill). Tom, eleven years old at the time, "...unheralded for it to this day, became the first Tar Heel to fly."

The book itself is well-written, with plenty of vintage photographs of all the major places and players. It is well indexed and footnoted. The logical progression of the brothers from Ohio bicycle makers to world leaders in the race for powered flight provides a steady framework for the author to explore the peculiar people and events that surrounded the Wright brothers' quest. Tom Parramore is well known as an eminent North Carolina historian with many books and awards for his efforts. He has succeeded, once again, in bringing to light the social context surrounding the Wrights' experiments, thus giving new life to stripped cold historical facts. The book is best suited to academic libraries and large-to-medium public libraries with North Carolina collections.

— J. Boyd Bruce III
Hope Mills Library



Sylvia Wilkinson definitely knows her stuff. Whether describing the intricacies of maneuvering a dusty, backroads race track or debating the value of wire mesh windscreens and punctured motor mounts, it is apparent that Wilkinson speaks from experience. As a racing timer and scorer for race car champions such as Al Unser, Sr. and actor Paul Newman, Sylvia Wilkinson has entered a male-dominated world where she admits she must be better

than the men who surround her. She brings her expertise and her North Carolina background to her sixth novel, *On the 7th Day, God Created the Chevrolet*, detailing the racing passion of young Tom Pate.

Set in rural North Carolina in the early sixties, the novel focuses on the world of NASCAR racing and its subculture of tobacco-chewing, cussing, "good-old-boy" drivers and mechanics. If you're intrigued by a Ferrari on the Le Mans circuit, you will be disappointed. This is the world of rebuilt Fords and Chevys, shattered hulks stroked and smoothed into life by loving, callused, grease-stained hands.

Sylvia Wilkinson.

On the 7th Day, God Created the Chevrolet.

Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 1993. 420 pp. \$19.95. ISBN 0-945575-13-0.

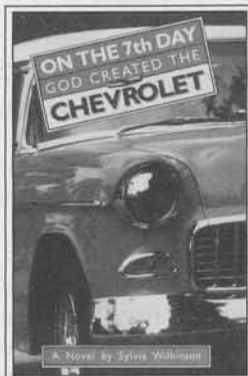
Central character Tom Pate does odd jobs throughout his high school years in order to make payments on a car. He leaves his family abruptly after his father makes one too many comments about the stupidity of racing: "Dumbest thing I've ever heard of," Hershel Pate went on, "a grown man driving a car as fast as he can go in a circle so small he can't help but run into everybody else's cars . . . What's the point of it?" For Tom, the

point is obvious, and he leaves to pursue his dream, abandoning a worshipful younger brother, Zack. Zack eventually follows his brother to Greenmont and its dusty little racetrack where racing careers are born as often as drivers are relegated to wheelchairs for the rest of their lives.

Wilkinson's plot meanders, beginning to seem a long-winded version of Henry James' "The Beast in the Jungle." Like James' protagonist, Tom Pate waits futilely for destiny to

unfold. He ends as he begins — waiting for the right car, the right sponsor, the right track.

Of all Wilkinson's characters, Zack seems the most human and believable. Others, male and female, are portrayed unlovingly, and it is surprising that Wilkinson, liberated from gender barriers herself, presents women in this novel as totally dependent on men. Men fare little better as they mouth obscenities, treat their cars better than their women, and display astounding ignorance of the world beyond: "When he read the caption, 'Monk sets self afire in Vietnam,' it was the first time Tom had heard of a country called Vietnam . . . He learned that Vietnam was in Asia and about the size of North Carolina."



If her characters are less than admirable and often unworthy of our interest, they are at least described with vivid precision: "Zack saw flour scattered across Cy's mother's bosom, which hung over her belly like a snow-covered awning. Her dress, buttoned up wrong, gave her a lopsided appearance. Noises bubbled from her mumbo jumbo like from Soho the palmist, and she wore knots tied in her skirt to ward off demons." The unique descriptions do much to further the plodding plot, injecting vibrancy into a novel that threatens to appeal to a select few.

On the 7th Day, God Created the Chevrolet is not a compelling page-turner that leaves the reader wishing for another hundred pages. It is a story that lingers in the reader's memory, provoking questions and providing a type of reassuring answer. This North Carolina author's insight into the racing passions that motivate and often kill young NASCAR drivers will appeal to many readers. An interesting addition to any public or academic library that possesses a North Carolina collection, this book should be scrutinized carefully by high school librarians, taking note of the omnipresent profanity and the immaturity of their patrons.

— Betsy Eubanks

Durham Academy Middle School Library

Other Publications of Interest

North Carolina Troops, 1861-1865: A Roster, Volume XIII, continues the excellent series of military service records of North Carolinians who fought in the Civil War. Each volume is more comprehensive than the last. This volume, which covers the Fifty-third through the Fifty-sixth infantry regiments, continues the solid coverage of the service record of each soldier who served. Additions include more detailed regimental and company histories. Civil War letters, diaries, newspapers, reminiscences, and other sources have been used to enhance the research. The *Roster* was compiled by Weymouth T. Jordan, Jr., who was assisted by numerous archivists, librarians, and Civil War enthusiasts across the state. Footnotes, maps, and illustrations are valuable additions to this volume. Every North Carolina collection, no matter the size, should have a set of these carefully researched and comprehensive volumes. (1993; Historical Publications Section, Division of Archives and History, 109 East Jones St, Raleigh, NC 27601-2807; xx, 752 pp; cloth, \$38 plus \$3 postage; ISBN 0-86526-018-4.)

The North Carolina Writers' Network offers the 1993-94 *North Carolina Literary Guide*, an informative listing of grants, residencies, literary magazines, small presses, writing markets, agents, writers groups, independent bookstores, and many other literary opportunities, at a special discount rate for libraries. (1993; NCWN, P.O. Box 954, Carrboro, NC 27510; 27 pp; paper, \$5.50, \$4.00 for libraries postpaid; no ISBN.)

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Algonquin Books publishes just one paperback each season, and this spring they have brought back a favorite collection of short stories by Max Steele, *The Hat of My Mother*, currently out of print in hardcover. The volume includes fourteen classics, among them "The Cat and the Coffee Drinkers," the O. Henry Prize winner "Color the Daydream Yellow," and "Where She Brushed Her Hair." (1994; P.O. Box 2225, Chapel Hill, NC 27515-2225; 270 pp; paper, \$9.95; ISBN 1-56512-076-0.)

Eugene E. Pfaff, Jr. and Michael Causey have collaborated on a mystery/horror novel set in Piedmont North Carolina. *Uwharrie* is the story of the revenge exacted by the last descendant of the tribe on the descendants of their white murderers, and a true, if confusing, bloodbath it is. A bored small town librarian with a flair for archaeology unravels the shameful secrets of his hometown's past. (1993; Tudor Publishers, Inc., 3007 Taliaferro Rd, Greensboro, NC 27408; 246 pp; \$19.95; ISBN 0-936389030-3.)

Every January, the Institute of Government publishes *County Salaries in North Carolina*, a survey of salary and wage information for the current fiscal year. The book lists population, total tax valuation, and salaries for fifty-three appointed and four elective positions (where applicable), for each county. (1994; Publications Office, Institute of Government, CB# 3330 Knapp Building, UNC-CH, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3330; 62 pp; paper; \$14 plus 6% tax for North Carolina residents; ISBN 1-56011-268-9.)

Libraries with popular sports and travel sections will be especially interested in Gary Gentile's *Ironclad Legacy: Battles of the USS Monitor*. The author recaps the military history of the ship, and narrates his own court battle with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to open the shipwreck site to divers. Eventually, he was able to lead a photographic expedition to the site. Includes 32 pages of photographs. (1993; Gary Gentile Productions, P.O. Box 57137, Philadelphia, PA 19111; 280 pp; cloth, \$25 postpaid; ISBN 0-9621453-8-6.) Gentile is also the author and publisher of the Popular Dive Guide Series, which includes *Shipwrecks of North Carolina: From the Diamond Shoals North* (1993; 240 pp; paper, \$20; ISBN 0-9621453-7-8) and *Shipwrecks of North Carolina: From Hatteras Inlet South* (1992; 232 pp; paper, \$20; ISBN 0-9621453-5-1).

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