

TRAILS IN HISTORY

Official Newsletter of the Lee County Historical Society

Volume 43, Number 4

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Published Quarterly

**LEE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
INVITES YOU TO THE 39TH ANNUAL**

HISTORICAL FAIR

Saturday, October 30

7:00am - 4:00pm

**LCHS Museum & Grounds
Hwy 14, Loachapoka, Alabama**

FOLKLIFE DEMONSTRATIONS

Log Cabin, Blacksmith Shop, Gristmill, Indian Exhibits

Quilting, Spinning, Weaving, Pottery

Basket Making, Natural Dyes, Broom Making

MUSIC

Bands, Singing Groups, Dulcimers

COUNTRY COOKIN'

Sweet Tater Biscuits, Fritters, Beans, Collards,

Camp Stew, and BBQ

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

Free Surrey Rides, Petting Zoo, Garden Harvest

Sugarcane Squeezin', Cider Press

**\$3.00 admits you to the museum and grounds
Children under 12 (with an adult) and over 90 FREE**

No Charge to LCHS members

LEE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 206
LOACHAPOKA, AL 36865

web address:

www.leecountyhistoricalsociety.org

e-mail: lchs1968@hotmail.com

Organized October 25, 1968, chartered as a non-commercial, non-profit corporation under the laws of the State of Alabama, Charter filed with Probate Court, Lee County, Alabama, November 8, 1968.

OFFICERS

President: Deborah McCord
Vice-President: Charles C. Mitchell
Treasurer: Roxanne Daughtry
Secretary: Jeannette Frandsen
HCC Delegate: Ann Pearson
Trails Editor: Janet Sugg

TRUSTEES

Term expires December 31, 2012
Barbara Ervin
Doyle Keasal
Charles H. Mitchell
Betty Patterson
Dr. Ann Pearson
Peggie Webster
Term expires December 31, 2011
Ruth Ann Bond
Kay Campbell
Pat Conover
Sheila Eckman
Zack Sprayberry
Carl Summers, Jr.

Term expires December 31, 2010
Dottie Marcinko
Arvle Marshall
John Rice
John Ross
Deena Rowell
Jim Witte

MUSEUM CALENDAR

October 9 - Second Saturday,
10am - 3pm - Scare Crow Contest,
Sorghum Syrup Making Demonstration,
Fair Preparation
Whistle Stop Pickers Play from
1:00-3:00

October 30 - 39th Annual Historical Fair/Syrup Sopping Saturday
8am - 4pm

November 9 - 4th Grade Field Trip,
Morris Avenue Elementary, Opelika

November 12 - 4th Grade Field Trip,
Wright's Mill Road Elementary,
Auburn

November 14 - Second Saturday
10am - 3pm
Whistle Stop Pickers Play from
1:00-3:00

December 12 - Second Saturday Christmas at the Homestead
10am 3pm
Traditional decorations, celebration
and fellowship, games
Whistle Stop Pickers Play from
1:00-3:00

December 13 - Board Meeting
2:30pm

LCHS MEMBERSHIP

Due: January 1 of each year
Individual: \$20 per individual
Family: \$30 (spouse and children)
Additional Donations Appreciated

All memberships and donations to LCHS are tax deductible. Please send your check (payable to LCHS), your mailing address (and e-mail address if applicable) to

Lee County Historical Society
P. O. Box 206
Loachapoka, AL 36865

LCHS President's Report

by Deborah McCord

Our Mission: to relate the history and traditions of Lee County, Alabama (and the surrounding areas) through preservation, restoration, education, presentation, publication, and acquisition.

Fall is here and we are gearing up for the thirty-ninth Historical Fair. This year promises to be an extremely good one. Please put October 30th on your calendar and be ready to assist the Society with our main fund raiser for the year. As you can imagine, it takes literally hundreds of man hours of planning, set-up, clean-up, manning booths, and carrying out all the work of an Historical Fair. Much work has already been done by Charles H. Mitchell, Zack Sprayberry, Sheila Eckman, Esther Marshall, and Barbara Gosser just to name a few. Everyone is needed, so please be ready to “answer the call.”

During the summer months, LCHS had a feasibility study conducted by the J. F. Smith Group, as to the possibility of having an Endowment Fund Campaign. This study yielded important information which we will share with our membership in the next Trails. I wish to thank Sheila Eckman for her work on this project.

Dr. Ann Pearson is chairing a committee to place an historical marker near the site of the Loachapoka Rosenwald School. This is an important historical site, as the Loachapoka School was actually the first school built out of

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SECOND SATURDAYS

On the second Saturday of every month, volunteers and re-enactors gather at the LCHS Museum in period attire to demonstrate their arts and crafts. Blacksmiths are usually working at the forge, spinners and weavers are upstairs in the Trade Center, and someone is always cooking up a meal in the log cabin over the open fire outdoors. The Trade Center Museum and other collections are always open on Second Saturdays. What a great opportunity for LCHS members and visitors to visit the museum! Activities usually start about 10am and continue until 3pm. The Whistle Stop Pickers dulcimer players gather to practice at 1pm. If you have a skill to demonstrate or just would like to help out on Second Saturdays, just dress up in 19th Century attire and join the fun. It's kind of like a mini-Historical Fair throughout the year!

- **October 9** - Scare Crow Contest, Fair Preparation
- **November 14** - Autumn comes to the Homestead
- **December 12** - Christmas at the Homestead

Traditional decorations, celebration and fellowship, games

Whistle Stop Pickers play every Second Saturday from 1:00-3:00

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over 4000 across the rural south. Julius Rosenwald, Chair of the Sears and Roebuck Company, provided seed money to Dr. Booker T. Washington, President of Tuskegee Institute, for the establishment of these schools. Unfortunately, the Loachapoka school burned in the 1960's. It is our hope that the school will not be forgotten by the placement of the marker. Other board members working on this project are Barbara Ervin, Jessie Summers, and Deena Rowell. The cost of the marker is approximately \$2500. If you would like to contribute to this project you may mail a check to our Post Office box or see any of the committee members.

The ARCSA (American Rainwater Catchment Systems Association) held a 3-day conference at our museum September 21-23, 2010. Thanks to the many volunteers, it was a successful conference. Here is a brief quote from one of the presenters:

“Having the training at the museum was a stroke of genius. There was ample room for the classwork, the setting

was most interesting, and the museum staff were outstanding in their support. At the breaks we had a great place to wander and learn about the local area. I thought it was absolutely great.”

Fall is also our main fieldtrip season. We have two scheduled already for November. The society always receives great reviews for our demonstrations during fieldtrips, thanks to our quality volunteers. We could always use a helping hand for our fieldtrips, so please consider volunteering to assist us.

There are many “unsung heroes” who do so much work around the society buildings and grounds. I wish to thank the Master Gardeners, board members, as well as all the Second Saturday demonstrators who assist us in opening our doors to the public. We have much to offer: school fieldtrip programs, conference and meeting space, campgrounds, historical buildings and displays. Please help us spread the word: We have a quality Pioneer Park on our grounds, like none other found in Lee County or the surrounding counties.

Whistle Stop Pickers

The dulcimer group has worked very hard this summer to put together a musical CD with traditional “old-time” and mountain songs. The CD was recorded in the Trade Center. We are pleased to announce that the CD will be available at the Historical Fair on October 30. Please consider purchasing several. They will make great Christmas gifts, and all proceeds will go to the LCHS.



From the Gardens. . .

The 2010 corn crop in the LCHS Crops Garden is an heirloom southern dent type white corn known as “Hickory King”. This was a popular variety for milling into corn meal and grits around the turn of the century. Its large kernels also were popular for making hominy. It was planted by hand with a “crow-hopper”, a device that uses the same principle as a dibble stick. The crop was harvested on September 11. The 3 rows, each about 60 feet long, produced about a bushel of corn or about 60 bushels per acre. The corn was shucked and shelled by hand and will be used to make hominy later this fall or winter.

Maize, the Crop of Ages

Charles C. Mitchell

Vice President, Lee Co. Historical Society

We have all learned that the early, native Americans in Alabama grew corn or maize as a staple crop. It undoubtedly moved up from Central America as early Americans domesticated the wild teosinte, an ancestor of modern corn. Teosinte (*Zea mexicana*) has been linked with the earliest maize in Mesoamerica and was first harvested as early as 10,000 years ago. During his first voyage to America in 1492, Columbus found the natives on the island of Cuba growing a crop they called “maiz” or “mahiz”. Hernando de Soto found the Indians in this area growing the crop when he came through in the 1540s.

From the Americas maize quickly spread to Europe, Africa and Asia. Despite its considerable productivity in comparison with wheat, its shorter growing season, and its considerable adaptive potential, Europeans looked upon maize as a foodstuff fit only for animals or the poorest of the peasantry, who ground it up with water and ate it as ground mush or porridge. This came to be known as “polenta” to the peoples of northern Italy, and has since been incorporated into European and American cuisines.

Quite naturally, the first European settlers in Alabama adopted agricultural practices from the Native Americans. The European name, “corn”, which simply meant grain, soon became associated with the maize that the Indians grew as a staple. Today, the rest of the world calls our “corn” by its more appropriate name, “maize”, and the Latin name is *Zea mays*.

Alabama Indians and the early European settlers here grew corn using slash and burn agriculture, now referred to as swidden agriculture. Cultivation involved scoring or felling trees and torching dry vegetation and timber left in the wake of the clearing operation. Dibble sticks were used to pierce the soil and sow the maize kernels among the charred timbers. This technique is still used today in third-world countries and on steep, mountain slopes. The dibble stick was probably no more than a sharpened wooden stick. By the late 19th and early 20th Century, corn was planted using the same equipment used to plant cotton. It was sowed in rows that could be cultivated in the same manner as cotton.

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Maize continued from page 5

Corn is highly responsive to fertilization but Southern tenant farmers rarely had money to spend on fertilizer. Under the sharecropping system that thrived in early 20th Century in Alabama, tenant farmers were sometimes provided a little fertilizer for their cotton crop. The landowners understood that fertilizer would make a larger cotton crop which meant more money in their pocket, but the tenant farmer was never given fertilizer to put on crops for his own use. Therefore, it was not uncommon to see

stalks of corn growing randomly in the cotton crop or in rows diagonally to the cotton rows. This way, the tenant farmer could produce a good corn crop for his own use without cutting the acreage he planted for the landowner.

Corn is a highly variable species. As early as the 1600s, there were as many as 11 different types or races of corn produced in North America with names such as Northern Flints (hard endosperm), Southern Dents (floury core with hard cap) and semidents (mostly



Hyacinth beans, a colorful heirloom and annual vining crop, is used to cover the arbor entrance to the McLain Garden. Its fragrant, hyacinth-shaped flowers not only attract hummingbirds but produce an abundance of black and white beans to save for next year's crop.

These Master Gardeners, who are creating "Grandma's Garden" at the Museum site, exemplify the fact that interest in LCHS is widespread. From left: Steve Crannel [Notasulga], Pixie Dillard [Smiths Station], Debbie Hartman and Becky Large [Auburn], and Beth Dorman [Waverly].



"Grandma's Garden" is a testament to their hard work. Many of the plants are donations from various members.

floury endosperm). Early settlers in Alabama grew mostly the Southern dents and saved the best seed from one crop to another. A good crop yield would have been around 10 bushels per acre. Average U.S. corn yields in 1933 were only 22 bushels per acre. Today's corn would not be recognized by an Alabama Creek Indian from 200 years ago. With the advent of more uniform hybrid corn varieties after World War II, higher fertilization and improved production practices, yields averaged almost 120 bushels per acre by 1990 and reached over 160 bushels per acre in 2003. Alabama's average corn grain yield was 104 bushels per acre in 2008.

Corn is used mostly for livestock feed. However, it has always been a staple human food in the Southern U.S. A typical meal of a Southern tenant farmer's family in the late 1800s would have been pork fatback, cornbread and

molasses (Smith,1995). This resulted in widespread pellagra, a disease caused by poor amino acid balance in human diets and a deficiency of niacin (vitamin B complex). Today, cornbread, grits, hominy and cornbread stuffing are still associated with traditional Southern meals. On the farm, excess corn production may have been fermented and distilled as corn liquor which greatly increased the value of the product. Federal and state regulations during prohibition made it illegal. Then, illegal production continued in secret and the product became known as moonshine.

References

- Smith, C.W. 1995. *Crop production, evolution, history and technology*. John Wiley & Sons. New York, NY.
- Mendoza, R.G. 2003. "The natural history of maize." *Encyclopedia of Food and Culture*. The Gale Group, Inc. (<http://www.answers.com/topic/the-natural-history-of-maize>)

Warshing Clothes Recipe provided by Kay Campbell

Years ago an Alabama grandmother gave the new bride the following recipe. This is an exact copy as found in an old scrapbook - spelling errors and all.

Build a fire in backyard to heat kettle of rain water. Set tubs so smoke wont blow in eyes if wind is pert. Shave one hole cake of lie soap in boilin water. Sort things, make 3 piles. One pile white, one pile colored, 1 pile work britches and rags.

To make starch, stir flour in cool water to smooth, then thin down with boiling water.

Take white things, rub dirty spots on board, scrub hard and boil, then rub colored don't boil just wrench and starch.

Take things out of kettle with broom stick handle, then wrench and starch.

Hang old rags on fence.

Spread tea towels on grass.

Pore wrench water in flower bed. Scrub porch with hot soapy water.

Turn tubs upside down.

Alabama School Funded by Lottery in 1854

Carl Summers

Past President, LCHS

The Southern Military Academy began in 1851 in Fredonia, Chambers County, Alabama. It was started by Gibson F. Hill when he was 43 years of age. Hill was born in Georgia and lists his occupation on the 1850 census as farmer.

Gibson Hill served in the Alabama Legislature in 1853-1854 and succeeded in getting a bill passed and signed into law on February 7, 1854 authorizing a lottery to help support the Academy. The Act reads as follows:

To aid the Southern Military Academy of Chambers County, Alabama.

Section 1. Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the State of Alabama in General Assembly convened, that Gibson F. Hill of Chambers County, Alabama, be and he is hereby authorized and fully empowered to set up a lottery to raise funds to enable him to increase the staff of instructors in his Military Academy, enlarge the apparatus, reduce the tuition and to aid generally the said military academy.

Section 2. Be it further enacted that the said Gibson F. Hill is authorized to employ competent agent or agents to attend to and generally superintend the business connected with said lottery and the drawing of the same.

Section 3. Be it further enacted that a correct amount of the net proceeds of the said lottery shall be kept and as soon as the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars is realized therefrom, then the authority to set up and carry on the lottery shall cease.

Section 4. Be it further enacted that this act shall continue in full force dur-

ing the term of three years from date of passage.

Gibson Hill was a member of the Union Primitive Baptist Church. The church disapproved of the lottery and in July 1854 conducted a church trial to determine if Mr. Hill should be excommunicated. Virginia Smith tells of the church trial held at the Union Baptist Church as follows: "A descendant of the pioneer John Hurst, the Rev. M.B. Hurst, was present at the trial which he said included a packed house. The trial was held on Saturday which was their regular meeting day. The cadets, in uniform, attended in a body to hear the trial. The charges were made according to the church policies and Major Hill spoke in his own defense. He did not deny that the school was supported by a lottery but he did quote the scripture where King Saul was chosen by casting lots and that the Apostles used lots to choose members. The Baptist preachers came back with the statement that the word lottery is not found in the Bible. Major Hill's reply to this was that the names of the two preachers were not in the Bible. This was thought to be such a brilliant reply that the cadets rose as a body to cheer their popular Major."

As a result of the trial Gibson Hill was excommunicated from the Union Primitive Baptist Church and later joined the Missionary Baptist at New Hope. He went right ahead with the lottery and an advertisement to publicize it appeared in the Montgomery Advertiser and State Gazette on May 15, 1855.

The notice that appeared in the Montgomery Advertiser and State

From the *Montgomery Advertiser and State Gazette* on May 15, 1855

Southern Military Academy Lottery!

By the authority of the State of Alabama.

Conducted on the Havana plan. Class P.

To be drawn the second of June:

1 prize of \$15,000

1 prize of \$5,000

1 prize of \$4,000

1 prize of \$3,000

1 prize of \$2,000

1 prize of \$1,500

1 prize of \$1,100

5 prizes of \$1,000

10 prizes of \$500

10 prizes of \$200

10 prizes of \$129

24 prizes of \$100

In all, 501 prizes, amounting to \$60,000.

Every prize drawn at each drawing, and paid when due. Without Deduction

Tickets \$10—Halves and Quarters in proportion.

Bills on all solvent banks at par. All communications strictly confidential. -

Sam Swan, Agent and Manager, Montgomery, May 15, 1855.

Gazette on May 12, 1855, lists the instructors, describes the fees to be charged, the courses to be taught and the uniform to be worn:

Southern Military Academy, Freedomia: Chambers County, Alabama G. F. Hill, Esq. Principal and Proprietor. Maj. N.J. Armstrong, graduate of the State Military Academy, South Carolina, Dr. Putnam and J.S. Parker, assistants.

The Fourth Scholastic Year of this Academy commenced on Monday, January 15, 1855, and will continue in session during forty weeks. As this Academy received very liberal assistance from the State at the last session of the Legislature, there will be no charge for tuition.

On entering the institution an initiation fee of \$30.00 will be required of each cadet, except as come under the following provisions, viz: Each county in the State of Alabama is entitled to send one cadet free of charge. Such cadet to be selected by the Judge of Probate and County Commissioners from such men as are talented, deserving and of good moral character. Orphans should receive the preference.

Spelling, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Grammar, Geography, and History, Algebra, geometry, plain, descriptive and analytical, trigonometry, calculus, shadows and perspective, natural and moral philosophy, chemistry, conveying, constitutional law, ancient

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languages, French, civil and military engineering, surveying, mechanics and astronomy. Tactics will be taught at such times as not to interfere with the regular studies. The discipline will be enforced.

Uniform: Dress coats of grey cadet cloth, standing collar; trimmed with convex metallic buttons, and sixteen-inch black cloth, according to the usual style,- pants of grey cloth with black stripe on the outer seam one and one-eighth inches in width to be worn till the first of May. White pants from the first of May till September. The uniform is not to be worn except on general parades and such special occasions as the military instructor may direct.

The academy buildings are large and well arranged and the location is eminently beautiful. Board can be Procured from eight to ten dollars per month.

The principal will so direct the education of his pupils as, if possible, to make them practical and useful men. The experience and qualifications of the instructors will entitle this institution, in a high degree, to public confidence. --(Signed) A. F. Zachry, Secretary of the Board of Visitors.

Since each County in the State of Alabama could send one cadet free of charge, there were students attending from all over the State. Mindful of the temptations of downtown Fredonia, S. Mims of Prattville, Alabama, wrote to his son Wilbur on October 25, 1855, "Visit Fredonia as little as possible. I should think an arrangement might be made to have the mail sent to your school by private conveyance. This would supersede the necessity of the boys going so often, as to seeking pleasure that should consist in your

books. They should be your companions, and then there will be no room for complaint."

The following comments appeared in the *S.W. Baptist* (Tuskegee, Ala.) dated October 9, 1856: *It was understood that the Military Academy at Fredonia, under the management of Major G.B. Hill, was soon to be removed to LaFayette; and it was resolved to discontinue the school at latter place in favor of that enterprise. It is understood also, that Mr. Blanchard so long and favorably known as the Principal of the LaFayette Male High School will be associated with Major Hill in the Military Academy. We bespeak for that school a liberal patronage under the management of our most successful enlightened and gifted instructors.*

The school did move to LaFayette in 1856 or 1857 "in the hope that it would receive better patronage", according to "The History of LaFayette", an unpublished manuscript in the University of Alabama Archives. "Its principal was Professor C.M. Blanebasel who had come south from Maine, assisted by Major Armstrong who had charge of the military department and a Mr. Carlisle. There were about ninety students in the college proper, i.e. in the military department, although a great number of smaller boys attended the school. This school flourished until 1859, when it was discontinued."

Gibson Hill and his family continued to live at the school site in Fredonia. Local tradition is that the Southern Military Academy moved from Fredonia to Auburn and was the beginning of Auburn University, however, no evidence could be found to substantiate this.

Museum Report

Jessie Summers, LCHS museum Curator

Having that marvelous invention called air conditioning in our Trade Center this past summer made it a pleasure to work there and to have guests. One man from Opelika brought his Texas family. They managed to see all the buildings in spite of the heat, by coming back to the Trade Center often for a glass of ice water. It was a fun visit for me to hear their happy chatter and to tell them stories of our part of the south.

The painting of the upstairs has been completed. That has given the whole place a brighter, cleaner look and inspired us to get started on a major job of cleaning and “fixing” things. **Matt Mitchell** has been a really good helper to the painters and now to me. Soon we will have all the things back in place and welcome visitors again.

Mike Garrett continues to enrich our collection of books concerning Auburn University. *Lengthening Shadows*, which uses pictures and words in a brief sketch of Auburn’s buildings and the individuals for whom they are named, and *The Auburn Band 1899 - 1962*, which has lists of Band members, history, and good photographs, are the

most recent donations. Our collection is now quite large and will soon be ready for researchers.

Zack Sprayberry donated a map of a proposal for Chewacla Park and added this, “The most interesting thing about the old drawing of Chewacla Park is that Moore’s Mill Creek was called Naufaba Creek. The word “Naufaba” is a Creek Indian word possibly meaning beech tree. I know that Chewacla Creek is shown as Chewacalahatchie on some old maps I have.”

In August the **Camellia Garden Club** met with us, and **Ruth Downs** from West Point, GA, brought her daughter, **Dee Downs**, from Atlanta for a visit in September. For three days we were hosts to a conference of **American Rainwater Catch Systems** people from many states. I talked to one man from Philadelphia who was sitting on the steps of the cook house looking so pleased and content. He said, “This reminds me so much of my childhood home in the country.” They all were happy to be with us instead of “in another hotel in another city,” and we were happy they were here.

Requesting Your Help

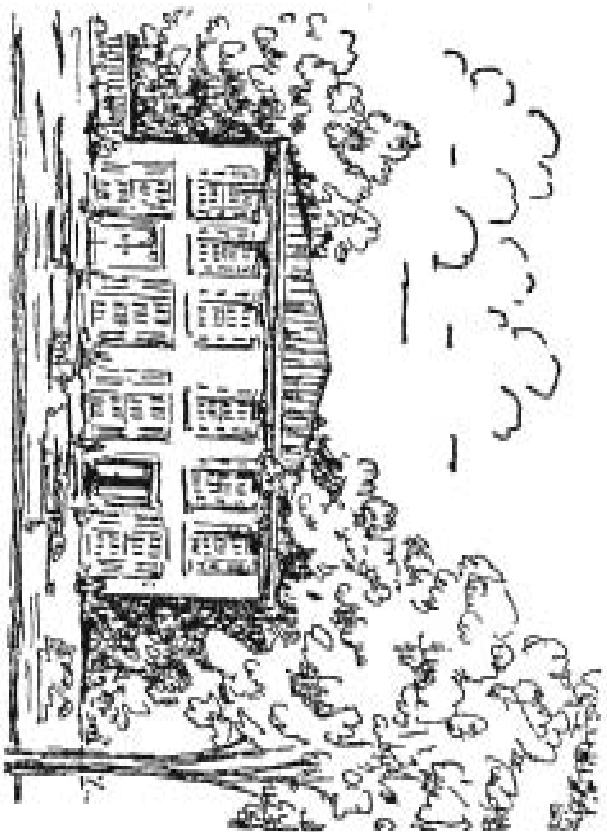
Donations of Old Brick for Grandma’s Garden

Lee County Master Gardeners are creating a new, improved and enlarged “Grandma’s Flower Garden” by the Trade Center. They need old, used bricks for the new flower beds. Broken bricks will work as well Sorghum Syrup Making demonstration. If you have some old bricks that you’d like to donate, please contact one of the following:

- Julie Burns - voicejules@yahoo.com
- Steve Crannel - stevecrann@earthlink.net
- Beth Dorman - bethdorman@yahoo.com
- Debbie Hartman - hartman304@bellsouth.net
- Kaite Lunsford - digginlife77@yahoo.com

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