

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

HENRY SCHUMACHER FARM (Schumacher Farm Park)

HALS NO. WI-19

Location: 5682 Hwy 19, Waunakee, Dane County, Wisconsin
Occupies the SE ¼ of the SW ¼ of T9 R8 S4, within Schumacher Farm Park.
43.192344°, -89.432790° (Center of Schumacher house, Google Earth, WGS84)

Significance: Locally significant to the early settlement of Dane County and the Village of Waunakee, the property was developed beginning in 1892 by Henry Schumacher, an early tenant landowner.

The Henry Schumacher Farm remains due to the vision of Henry's daughter, Marcella Schumacher Pendall, a well-loved educator and cultural figure in Waunakee. Marcella recognized by the early 1950s the threats development posed to both natural and cultural heritage within rural landscapes. Her innovative approach to preserving the property as an educational and historic landscape focused on restoring the property's remnant prairie, one of the most threatened natural communities regionally and globally.¹ Planning for the Farm's long-term survival, Marcella established the first collaborative site management program in the Dane County Park system, a "Triad" consisting of Dane County Parks, a Friends group, and a financial Trust.²

Altered due to c1960 road expansion, the Henry Schumacher Farm represents small-scale farms increasingly threatened by residential and commercial development pressure³ from the towns that these farms helped found.

Description: *Organization of Farm and Homestead*
Originally a quarter-quarter section, the Henry Schumacher farm now measures approximately 37 acres after losing 3 acres along its southern border to widen Highway 19. The historic farm exists as the core of a larger county park, Dane County Schumacher Farm Park. The Park spreads out over an additional 80 acres on two quarter-quarter sections east and northeast of the Henry Schumacher Farm, planted with field crops and holding a modern Amish-constructed bank

¹ "Prairies communities of Wisconsin." Webpage. Wisconsin DNR (<https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/EndangeredResources/Communities.asp?mode=group&Type=Prairies>). Accessed July 2020.

² Dane County Historical Society marker, erected 2000, located at Schumacher Farm Park

³ "Dane County Farmland Preservation Plan," 2012, p7

barn built to house the Center for Rural History. Schumacher Road continues to define the western boundary of the Henry Schumacher Farm.

The Henry Schumacher Farm is organized by the hilly glacial drumlin landscape, with a roughly 4-acre homestead⁴ prominently occupying the flat drumlin top. Situated in the southeast corner of the quarter-quarter section, the roughly square-shaped homestead is framed at the west and north edges by thin woodlands, by Hwy 19 along the southern edge, and a farm drive on the east. Restored dry-mesic prairie extends downhill north and west beyond the homestead, terminating in a triangular cornfield that occupies flat land in the northwest corner of the farm. A narrow band of woodland extends from near the center of the parcel to the northeast corner, covering the steepest slope on the site. Prairie has replaced crops on the slope west of the homestead, but the patterning of vegetation on the Farm landscape continues to follow the contour of the land.

Henry Schumacher built his homestead within a compartmentalized framework of cardinally oriented functional areas. Bounded by the house and farm buildings, and focused around the windmill, four functional quadrants were organized by the north-south aligned entry drive. West of the drive, the house front (east) and south yards were recreational living spaces; a utility area containing the outhouse extended north of the house to the farm buildings. East of the drive, a fenced livestock yard extended south from the barn; and a kitchen garden and orchard filled the southeast corner of the homestead. Realignment of the entry drive and reorientation of a new interpretive Heirloom Garden has significantly altered the spatial organization Henry Schumacher developed.

Circulation

The original unpaved entry drive led north nearly perpendicular from Hwy 19 to terminate near the center of the farm core, adjacent to the milk house foundation (c1915). After major realignment sometime in the late 1950s to early 1960s, only a short segment of the historic drive remains near the milk house foundation. The drive now curves sharply from the homestead center southeast to connect to a new entry drive at the eastern edge of the historic Henry Schumacher Farm. Near the house, the gravel paved remnant historic drive has been widened to provide a gravel parking pad, frequently used by park volunteers.

A culverted entry from Schumacher Road provides vehicle access to the lower fields, functioning today as a mown trail skirting along the toe of the steep northern drumlin slope before connecting to the adjacent county park parcels.

Walkways are limited to the house yard, as they were historically, but have been rebuilt with new materials in slightly altered alignments to improve accessibility to the Schumacher house. The fieldstone path Henry Schumacher laid to connect

⁴ Measured by author using Dane County Land and Water Resource Viewer GIS with georeferenced 1937 aerial. Area includes the square defined by the tree line (north and west borders) and highway and farm lane (east and south borders).

the house to the windmill across the entry drive has been replaced with a crushed rock path, which largely retains the historic curvature. The original limestone pavers were reused to connect the north and south porches with a new path (2018) that runs parallel to the house rather than following the arc that historically connected the south porch to the midpoint of the main limestone walkway. An ornamental limestone path has replaced the utilitarian wood plank walkway that connected the northwest house corner of the house to the outhouse. A woodchip trail guides visitors from the windmill to the interpretive Heirloom Garden. A network of mown paths enables visitors to explore the prairie restoration.

Buildings and Structures

Only the house (1908) and barn (1909) are original to the property, while four other historic buildings have been relocated from other properties: a granary, chicken coop, corn crib, and hog house. West of the barn, the addition of period-correct but non-contributing farm buildings restore a linear organization like the historic alignment. East of the barn, addition of a hog house and corn crib are arranged in a cluster, uncharacteristic of the linear arrangement Henry Schumacher applied elsewhere on the property. A two-stalled pit toilet sits behind the farm buildings, clustered on the east side of barn.

The Schumacher House, a cruciform two-story wood frame building with porches on the east façade, is in good condition and currently serves many functions: archive and offices for the Friends of Schumacher Farm; tour location that interprets Marcella Schumacher's life; demonstration kitchen for woodstove cooking classes. Efforts to improve visitor access to the building spurred replacement of the original wooden porches and steps with poured concrete, and construction of a wooden ramp at the north side of the north porch, the primary entry. Matching ornate metal posts replace the distinctive wooden posts that existed historically: round columns at the south porch, and turned wooden posts with square bases at the north porch. Painted white, the house continues to stand out amongst the deep red farm buildings, which are trimmed in white as they were during the historic period. A brown painted outhouse, historic but not original, is sited on the original location. The stone foundation and wood barn is also in good condition, and rehabilitation treatments including a poured concrete floor and electricity allow it to function as an event space during the warmer months.

Water Features

The east-facing Schumacher house and south-facing farm buildings are oriented toward a period correct, but non-contributing windmill near the homestead center. A galvanized Monitor windmill, sited roughly 20 feet east from the original windmill location, is near the concrete milk house foundation (c1917). During the historic period, a cattle tank (not extant) would have completed the trio of water features clustered at the center of the homestead. A spigot and hose, just north of the milk house foundation partially concealed by plantings provides

water for the Heirloom Garden. Additional historic water features include a cistern and filtration system that captured and stored potable water beneath the house and a small cistern west of the barn that has been demolished and filled.

Views and Vegetation

The Henry Schumacher Farm sits roughly 80 feet higher than the nearby Village of Waunakee, located around one mile west along Hwy 19. Encroaching industrial and commercial development south and west of the farm have reduced the historically expansive views across farm fields and prairie toward the village and in all directions. Vegetation along the south and west edges of the homestead has been added and maintained to lightly buffer these visual intrusions. From the house south porch, the drumlin elevation still provides views to the city of Madison including the State Capitol building, approximately 8.5 miles to the south.

Though the surrounding landscape has gained more trees with increasing residential development, the wooded north, east and west boundaries of the hilltop homestead are still visually striking in the otherwise open agricultural landscape. The loss of a tree line along the southern boundary permits greater visual and auditory intrusion from the busy Hwy 19. Restored mesic and dry-mesic prairie heavy with flowers sweeps across the hilltop (“Upper Prairie”) and west slope (“Lower Prairie”), which are expanded since Henry Schumacher began farming the west slope and lower fields. A rented field in the northwest corner is planted in corn and a large former field between the Lower Prairie and the cornfield is maintained as mown grass for event parking. The steepest portion of the north slope has been transitioned to a woodland community with white pine, hackberry, sugar maple and mountain ash.

Mown grass dominates the house yard as it did historically, but trees and ornamental plantings have expanded throughout the Farm landscape. A lone maple tree (unknown variety) planted by the Schumachers to shade the milk house is gone, although several Norway maples now grow within the barnyard area. An assortment of trees favoring Norway maple provide shade for the grassy recreational space west of the house, which was historically dominated by fruiting trees and volunteer species. Four black pine (*Pinus thunbergii*) line the west side of the modern entry drive revealing the house. A 15-foot row of peony shrubs flanks the drive’s east side, which were historically located in the house’s south yard. A large cedar located near the southeast corner of the house was once located on the west edge of the historic entry drive, but now marks the turning point for the modern drive.

An interpretive Heirloom Garden fills only a small portion of the homestead’s large southeastern quadrant that was originally devoted to a kitchen garden and orchard. A new orchard has been established outside of the historic farm boundary, near the new Friends of Schumacher Farm Center for Rural History.

The Heirloom Garden is aligned northeast-southwest running roughly parallel to the entry drive. Fenced with wood posts and hog wire, the Heirloom garden features raised beds holding a changing variety of heirloom vegetables and flowers. Adjacent to the Heirloom Garden, unfenced beds hold other edible plantings including asparagus, strawberries, a grapevine, and an herb garden.

Efforts to educate visitors on sustainability and ecology are evidenced by a compost bin east of the Heirloom garden, north of the chicken coop and pollinator plantings at the edge of the barnyard.

Flower-filled planting beds have proliferated around the house, outhouse, and non-historic site furnishings, blurring the boundaries of house zone from work areas that existed historically.

Site Furnishings

A variety of site furnishings occur throughout the homestead to serve park visitors: a wayfinding kiosk and trash receptacles at the end of the entry drive; picnic tables, a fire pit and grill stand against the south side of the barn; a sandbox, Little Free Library and horseshoe pits in the rear yard between the outhouse and chicken coop; and interpretive signs at buildings, prairie plantings and garden. A security light on a tall utility pole stands in the center of the rear yard buffered by a thick planting bed. A modern wooden arbor placed near the drive covers a utility pipe, and while referencing arbors historically present on the property, is not located near their original locations at the southeast house corner and centered on the east façade.

Historic photographs suggest site furnishings were sparse on the Henry Schumacher Farm, and excepting widespread fencing, limited to the house yard. Simple benches, fashioned of boards, provided seating in the front yard, and carved masonry planters were set at intervals along the east façade. Fencing was a functional and dominant feature on the homestead, with page fencing used to enclose livestock in the barnyard, exclude animals from the vegetable garden, and define the homestead borders. A low rounded-top wire fencing excluded free ranging chickens and geese from the front yard, a space reserved for picnics and croquet during the period. Fencing only occurs around the Heirloom Garden, reducing the sense of a compartmentalized working landscape.

History:

The native prairie landscape that Henry Schumacher shaped into a farm was ceded to the Federal government by the Winnebago in 1832 with the Rock Island Treaty that ended the Black Hawk War. By 1845 permanent settlement began several miles south of the Farm around a mill on Sixmile Creek,⁵ and by 1861 a small village, Lester, developed northwest of the farm. At this time, the property

⁵ Paulson, Jerry (ed.) *Waunakee Centennial, 1871-1971*. 1971, p3

was depicted on an 1861 plat as undeveloped, with a finger of marshy land extending northeast across the center of the 40-acre parcel.

By 1873 the Village of Waunakee had developed around a stop built by the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad as they extended their line from Madison to St. Paul Minnesota.⁶ By 1890, the village had grown to 300 people,⁷ with the village's first doctor, and perhaps only resident landowner,⁸ Nathan M. Wheeler, owning the future Henry Schumacher Farm. Following Dr. Wheeler's death, Henry Schumacher purchased the property in 1892 from his widow, Pamela.

When purchased by Henry Schumacher, the 40-acre hilly property contained a modest wood frame house at the top of the drumlin hill, surrounded by a small grapery, orchard west of the house, berry shrubs, and a small barn. Believing the hill too high to drill a well, Dr. Wheeler built a charcoal-filtered cistern to collect rainwater. Virgin prairie filled the parcel surrounding the 1-acre hilltop homestead on which Henry Schumacher began grazing cattle.⁹

Henry Schumacher began to develop the property as a diversified and self-sustaining homestead in 1906 in preparation for his intended nuptials. That year he began to lay out his farm, moving the Wheeler house approximately 100 feet north of its existing location to rest on the west side of the existing small barn, and commissioning local carpenter, Frank Schwen, to design and construct a new house in its place.¹⁰ The Schumacher house designed to face east, toward the center of the homestead, rather than west to views of the Village of Waunakee, was completed in 1908, the year Henry Schumacher married Eveline Busby. The following year, the Schumachers hired another local carpenter, Henry Adler, to build a large stone walled barn east of the Wheeler barn. Prior to its completion, they used the Wheeler house to stable Eveline's horses and Wheeler barn to shelter the Schumacher's cows.¹¹ A corn crib and chicken house soon followed, built in a row extending west of the Wheeler house, completing a line of buildings that tidily defined the north edge of the homestead, with easily accessible work spaces. A windmill and accompanying hand pump, was centrally located for access from the house and barnyard, provided well water and weather forecasting as it spun with prevailing winds.¹²

Marcella, the Schumacher's only living child, arrived in 1910, and during her childhood, Henry and Eveline Schumacher continued to improve the homestead organization, function, and appearance, with the occasional help of talented hired hands. Farm buildings were uniformly painted a deep red with white trim. A

⁶ Paulson, Jerry (ed.) *Waunakee Centennial, 1871-1971*. 1971, p3

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Schumacher, Marcella, 1988 master plan.

⁹ Schumacher, 1993, p16

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid, p19

¹² Ibid, p29

machine shed was built in 1915 to house farm equipment, around the time lathed railings were added to the front (north) porch. Applying modern construction techniques for that era, a concrete foundation milk house was built next to the windmill so that it could be filled with cold well water, keeping the milk cans fresh. In 1917, the round wooden cattle tank was replaced with a rectangular concrete tank.¹³

Modernization impacted other areas of the farm, including installation of telephone wires, resulting in the loss of white ash trees planted along Schumacher Road, and significant trimming of approximately 100-year old white ash trees along Hwy 113.¹⁴

The Schumachers self-sufficient and diversified farm held a suite of animals including horses, several milking cows, Poland China hogs, and Plymouth Rock chickens, and geese. Using the drumlin slope to their advantage, the Schumachers laid out a nearly half-acre kitchen garden and orchard in the southeast corner of the homestead on the south-facing slope to capture sunlight. Among other things, they grew sunflowers, cabbages, rhubarb, grapes, and „local varieties of beans, squash and greens.“¹⁵ In their fields that extended west and northwest from the homestead, the Schumachers grew oats, barley, corn, potatoes, timothy grass, clover, and tobacco for a short time. On the flat hilltop north of the barn, a fenced area roughly 1.5 acres in area provided pasture for the Schumacher’s cows, while prairie spread over the remainder of the steep hillside north of the homestead. The hill was a profusion of colorful blooms through the spring and summer, including pasque flowers, violets, shooting stars, puccoons and wild roses.

In the broad expanse of prairie that extended beyond the Henry Schumacher Farm, trees were planted and encouraged to define the farmstead boundaries, line the entry drive, and create cooling shade. Decorative elements were spare early on, and located primarily around the south porch, adjacent to the parlor. A dense patch of yellow roses was prominent against the south side of the south porch and long unpainted wooden planter boxes supported by posts rested against the eastern front of the south porch. Only one limestone path led to the front porch with large limestone slabs functioning as the bottom step at each porch.

Marcella entered the first class at Edgewood Junior College in 1927, completing her undergraduate degree at the UW-Madison and then completing a Master’s in political science. An active member of the International Club while at university, Marcella held frequent student gatherings at the farm, and in 1932 began an annual Memorial Day picnic to send off international students at the end of the

¹³ Schumacher, Marcella Pendall. 1993, p20

¹⁴ Ibid, 49

¹⁵ Smith, Susan Lampert, “Farm life of past remains vibrant,” *Wisconsin Sytate Journal*, January 26, 1992.

academic year.¹⁶ The Schumachers hosted visiting scholars and cultural events.¹⁷ During this period the Schumachers created a more refined and ornamental character in the front and south yards visible in photos from the period. A density of floral plantings appeared against the house, and thick masses of vines and shrubs shaded the front porch, which appear in historic photos to have been elderberry and common ivy. Decorative arbors were placed in the center of the east façade and at the south corner of the house, and a series of carved masonry urns along the east facade replaced the earlier rustic wood planters. The Schumachers also constructed an arcing limestone path from the south porch to the main path. Short fencing protected the lawn from livestock, providing a tidy grass surface for croquet. Double peonies appear in historic photos from this time period, similar to those along the entry drive. Historic photos suggest that during the mid-1930s the original wooden windmill tower was replaced with galvanized metal.

An aged man in the late 1930s, Henry Schumacher, began renting out his pastureland¹⁸ and selling “tame hay, clover and timothy,”¹⁹ suggesting a decline in farming activity before his passing in 1942.

After years of working around the country, Marcella returned permanently to the farm in 1957, caring for her aging mother, and teaching Spanish and history at Waunakee High School while also advising the student newspaper. Marcella and her mother continued to rent crop fields and pasture, with large bare patches suggesting intensive grazing. Aerial photography from 1957 indicates that of the original farm buildings, only the Schumacher barn and small Wheeler barn remained; the large kitchen garden was no longer planted but a portion of the orchard remained intact. A teardrop-shaped turnaround was added to the end of the entry drive.

By 1968 Hwy 19 was widened to four lanes and to accommodate the increasingly steep slope from the roadway excavation, a new entry drive wound its way west along the grade.²⁰ In a 1968 aerial, the farm appears to be in crops, but no longer pastured, and the native prairie remnant on the steep north drumlin slope appears to show young trees. Plantings appear on the west side of the new drive and parking pad may be the installation of the bridal veil spirea and Rose of Sharon that remain today. The highway widening also resulted in the loss of ancient ash trees along the south edge of homestead. The remnant of the Schumacher orchard is also demolished by 1968.

¹⁶ “International Club Picnic” *The Waunakee Tribune*, Thursday June 6, 1935, p4

¹⁷ “Mrs. Bon Queto Gives Address,” *The Waunakee Tribune*, November 1, 1934.

¹⁸ “Want and For Sale,” *The Waunakee Tribune*, June 27, 1935

¹⁹ “Classified Ads,” *Waunakee Tribune* July 10, 1941

²⁰ Observed through comparison of historic aerials and site observation in 2020

In response to mounting development pressure she first recognized in the post WWII housing boom and again in the mid-1970s, Marcella donated the farm to the Dane County Park System in 1978. She hoped to provide the park, named in honor of her father, as ““a living history museum that documented and represented farm life during the early 20th century” providing a historical and natural “educational legacy” to the people of Waunakee.²¹ Only the house and Schumacher barn remained in 1978, along with approximately an acre of prairie along the steep northern slope.

Marcella understood the prairie as an important interpretive aspect of early settler life as well as an important ecological feature²² and as a UW alum and educator at heart, she included the UW Madison landscape architecture program in developing plans for the property.²³ After transferring the first 14 acres as a “strolling park”²⁴ a local Eagle Scout candidate began the prairie restoration through brush removal.²⁵ Dane County Parks continued the effort in 1979 focused on the “Lower Prairie” west of the homestead, and worked to create a woodland on the steepest eastern portion of the northern slope, planting wildflowers, sugar maples, mountain ash and white pine.²⁶

In fall of 1985 Schumacher Farm Park hosted local students at its first public event, “Pioneer Days at the Farm.”²⁷ The next year Marcella formed The Friends of Schumacher Farm, likely the first “Friends” group in Dane County, to steward the property and develop it as a “representative” site of early agriculture and rural lifeways in Dane County for the period the period 1895-1920.²⁸ The Lower prairie was planted in 1988 and by 1990 the Friends of Schumacher Farm had laid out and tilled an Heirloom Garden, and the Schumacher barn was rehabilitate in 1991 as an event space with a poured concrete floor, electricity, and enlarged openings on the south face.

Marcella remained in the house through a life lease until her death in 1993, tending gardens and “over 16 varieties of evergreen trees,”²⁹ identifying prairie plants for the Friends, and engaging students in habitat projects.³⁰ Through master planning efforts Marcella established a vision for restoring the farm as a “representative” site of early settlement farms, the result of which has an

²¹ Amy Jo Dusick personal communication, July 2020

²² Pendall, Marcella Schumacher, “Schumacher Farm Development Plan”, n.d., p1

²³ “Present Preliminary Plans for Schumacher Farm Park,” *The Waunakee Tribune*, Thursday May 25, 1978, Waunakee WI, p8.

²⁴ McBain, Roger, “Local Woman’s Living Legacy: ‘To Preserve the Land’, “ *The Waunakee Tribune*, March 30, 1978.

²⁵ “Troop 46,” *The Waunakee Tribune*, Thursday Nov 30, 1978, p 10

²⁶ Amy Jo Dusick, personal communication July 2020

²⁷ Amy Jo Dusick, personal communication July 2020.

²⁸ “Schumacher Farm Master Development Program,” Friends of Schumacher Farm, 1988, p3

²⁹ McBain, Roger, “Local Woman’s Living Legacy: ‘To Preserve the Land’, “ *The Waunakee Tribune*, March 30, 1978.

³⁰ Johnson, John K. “Scouts planning food collection,” *The Waunakee Tribune*, March 1990, p14

accumulation of items unrelated to the Henry Schumacher Farm and the dissipation of the functional design Henry Schumacher established.

Since her passing, the Friends have focused on restoring the house to the 1930s era and establishing educational programming on turn of the century farming and lifeways. As part of that mission, they have added historic farm buildings to the property from other Dane County properties, beginning with the Granary in 1999. A period-correct but smaller Monitor Steel pumping windmill made by the Baker Manufacturing Company in Evansville, Wisconsin was installed near the historic location in 2017. Farm machinery was placed on display around the homestead beginning in 2019.

Over the past three decades the Friends have also worked to create a pleasing park-like environment within the homestead, constructing recreational features such as a horseshoe pits and sandbox, and wayfinding and interpretive signage, along with greater density and diversity of floral plantings. To make the house more accessible for tours and cooking classes, the Friends repaved the historic front path and added a ramp at the north porch (2018).

Marcella's vision to expand the property and programming have been realized, beginning with the purchase of two additional parcels (1999-2001) and construction on the additional land of a bank barn to house the Center for Rural History (2019).

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"Schumacher Farm Dane County Park" marker erected by Dane County Historical Society, 2000.

Historian: Megan Turner, ASLA; with photographs by Rona Neri
July 30, 2020.



View west along the entry drive. The row of peonies at right are thought to be original (c1930), transplanted from their original location near the house. (Rona Neri, July 2020).



The Village of Waunakee watertower and encroaching development is visible behind the arbor. The remnant of the historic drive is visible in foreground with Vanhoutte spirea and Rose of Sharon, planted by Marcella, at right. (Rona Neri, July 2020)



Visitors standing on the entry drive with the Granary (not original) and information kiosk in background. Dane Co. Historical Society marker at right. (Megan Turner, September 2019)



A small section of rebar is exposed, but the milk house foundation, is in good condition. A spigot and hose used to water planting beds is close to the original windmill location. Dane County Historical Society marker at right. (Rona Neri, July 2020)



Fencing was a ubiquitous feature that organized the Henry Schumacher Farm, but today is limited to bounding the Heirloom Garden. (Rona Neri, July 2020)



The barnyard, no longer fenced, now holds a fire pit, barbecue stand and picnic tables. Granary to left of barn; hog shed and corn crib clustered at right. (Rona Neri, July 2020)



Established in 1990, the Heirloom Garden interprets the historic Schumacher garden, but was oriented northeast-southwest, parallel to the new entry drive. (Rona Neri, July 2020)



The rear yard was historically a working space with a washing table near the outhouse. Behind the grape arbor (center) is a sandbox and Little Free Library. (Rona Neri, July 2020)



Restored prairie on the flat drumlin hilltop where Henry Schumacher grazed cattle housed in the barn (at center). (Rona Neri, July 2020)



Tree tops mark the steep northern hillside where remnant prairie existed in 1978. Land near the water tower (distant left) is slated for development. (Rona Neri, July 2020)

RELEASE AND ASSIGNMENT

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HALS Short Format Historical Report for Henry Schumacher Farm

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