

The
SHAMROCK

NORTH PLATTE,
NEBRASKA

JANUARY-FEBRUARY - 1953

The North Platte Story

Products from surrounding farm lands play an important role in the economy of North Platte, Nebraska. Among the most popular crops are wheat, corn, oats, barley and alfalfa. Steady production is assured by sufficient irrigation facilities and fertility of lands. Many of the products are fed to local mills.



*Located "On the Main Street of America," North Platte, Nebraska,
Is One of the State's Principal Agricultural and Industrial Centers*

SOUTHWEST COLLECTION
Texas Tech University
LUBBOCK, TEXAS 79409

EAST and west along the low, flat lands of Western Nebraska is a long, narrow delta, formed by the North and South Platte Rivers as they join enroute to the wide Missouri River.

Less than a century ago, this delta was the rugged hunting grounds and battlegrounds for Sioux and Pawnee Indians; it was the setting for wars once waged between whites and Indians; and it was a vital part of the old Oregon Trail which threaded its course from eastern points to the faraway shores of the blue Pacific.

Today, this delta is one of the richest agricultural centers in the state, bound on the north

by the fertile sandhills of Nebraska, on the south by acres of rich, irrigated farm lands.

And situated at the point of this delta near the fork of the two waterways is one of Nebraska's more flourishing trading centers—the city of North Platte, Nebraska.

North Platte is the fifth largest city in the state with a population of over 15,000. The seat of Lincoln County, it is one of Nebraska's busiest transportation centers, situated amidst one of the state's most ambitious agricultural areas and boasting of more than 40 growing industries.

**Modern streets and business houses
in downtown North Platte attest to
the town's growth and expansion.**





City parks throughout North Platte provide residents and visitors ideal environments for rest or play. Like Cody Park, pictured here, all parks include restful picnic spots and adequate facilities for tennis, baseball, swimming and other popular sports. The town's swimming pool is one of the finest in the state.

It enjoys an easy, informal atmosphere and way of life by retaining a flavor of its Old West background, but it remains conscientiously up-to-date and progressive when it comes to civic accomplishments.

Governed under a mayor-council plan, North Platte is the home of many prosperous business houses and several modern residential districts. And it provides its citizens with the most adequate educational and recreational facilities.

North Platte maintains eight grade schools which are presently undergoing expansions covered by an \$886,000 bond issue, and it has recently constructed a new \$900,000 junior high school. A spacious senior high school rounds out the city's school system.

Three city parks provide playground space, swimming facilities and picnic spots.

North Platte was for 30 years the home of William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody, the famous scout and showman. Citizens preserve the memory of this popular personality with an annual presentation of the Buffalo Bill Rodeo, one of several western celebrations staged in North Platte each year.

It is held during the third week in June and is modeled after Cody's "World's Original Rodeo," first performed in North Platte in 1884.

North Platte was founded in the winter of 1866 by Andrew J. Miller, an employee of the Union Pacific Railroad Company.

Miller had learned in Omaha that the railroad company was to extend its line through the virgin delta, establishing a construction camp at the present site of North Platte.

He immediately ordered lumber and other materials shipped from Denver and constructed a general store in readiness for Union Pacific's construction workers.

This was but the beginning, for soon after the workers arrived, it was learned that the location would become a division point on the railroad. By the time the word had spread, farmers, ranchers and businessmen from all around were invading the small town and its surrounding countryside. One of Union Pacific's chief engineers, General G. M. Dodge, laid the site of the town, and in 1871, North Platte was incorporated as a city with a population of nearly 2,000.

A municipal form of government was adopted in 1875, and within another few years, the city had constructed a \$20,000 courthouse and a \$16,000 schoolhouse.

Meanwhile, the Union Pacific had poured millions of dollars into facilities to handle shop work and maintenance materials required for servicing the company's increasing flow of railway traffic.

Accompanying this vigorous growth was a rapidly expanding market, which, along with the town's central location and its availability of manpower, became irresistibly attractive to industrialists from the east. Soon factories and plants were springing up throughout the growing town.

As the city grew and expanded, the lands surrounding it contributed more and more to its economic growth.

The fertility of the sandhills extending miles to the north had long been known, but as cattlemen and farmers moved in, more productivity was realized.

Cattle fattened by the rich green grasses had to be shipped to market, and such products as rye, wild hay and alfalfa had to be processed and forwarded to distant points.

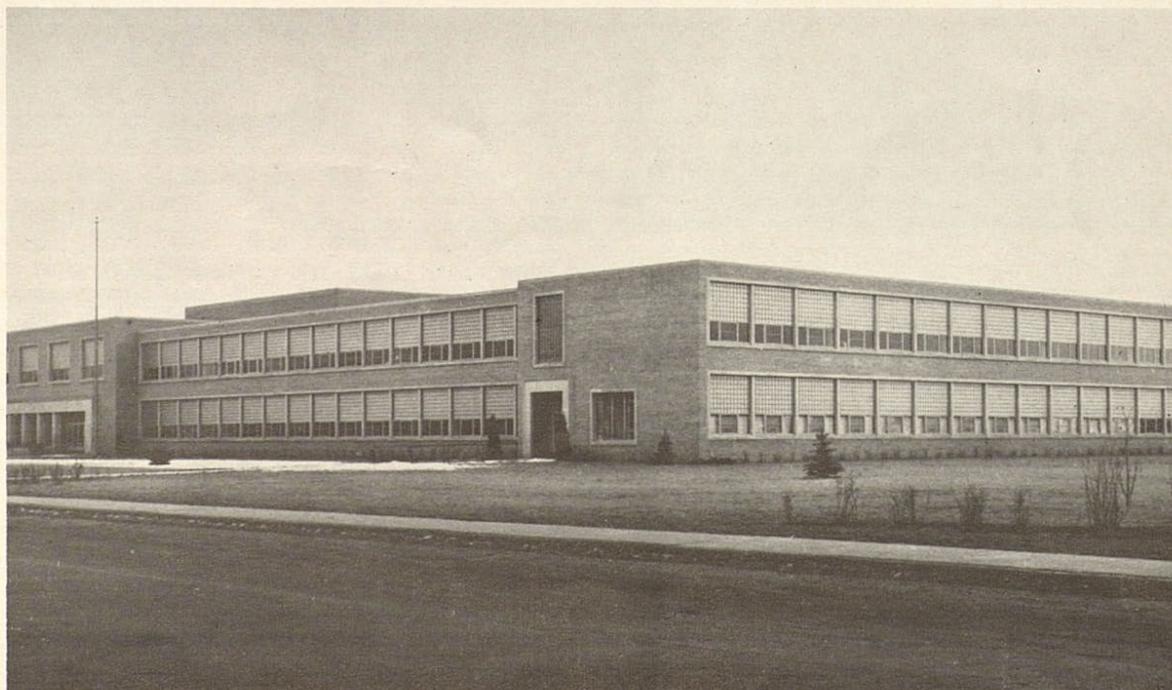
Today, these sandhill products are adequately supplemented by products of the drylands south and north of North Platte. These lands have become particularly productive since the construction of the Sutherland Irrigation Project in 1939.

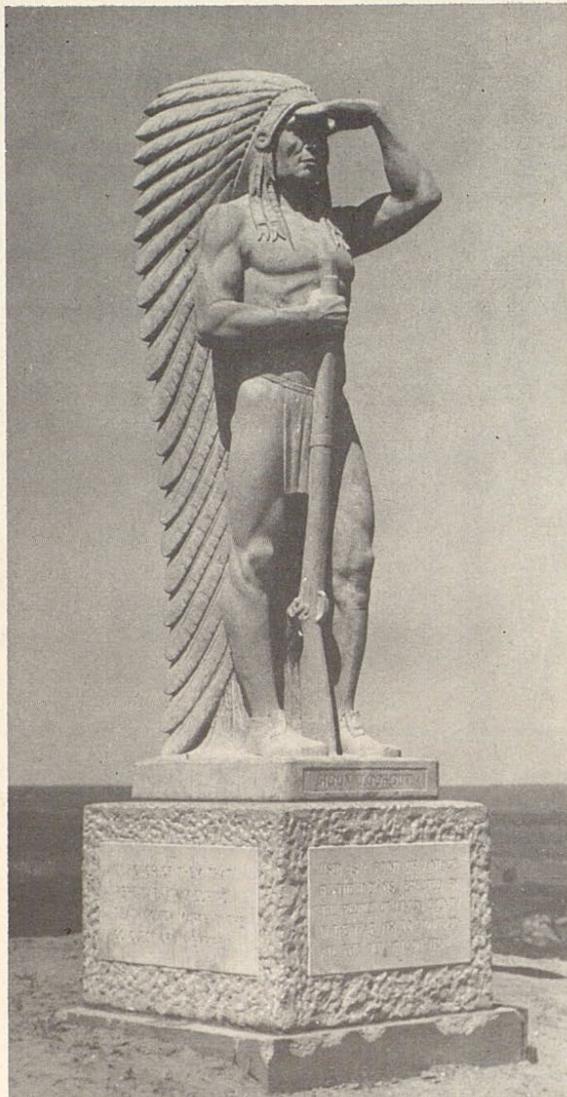
Funneling waters of the North Platte River southward to the dryland area, this project, besides furnishing hydroelectric power for the surrounding area, provides farmers of the dryland region with complete irrigation facilities.

Since completion of the project, farmers in the area have enjoyed a substantial boost in productivity.

Today they average about 46 bushels of irrigated corn to the acre; wheat farmers realize 16.2 bushels an acre; and alfalfa is produced at 7.35 tons an acre. There are also good yields of beets, oats, barley, sorghums and potatoes.

North Platte's educational facilities are among Nebraska's best. Recently constructed was this \$900,000 junior high school, an ultra-modern building with the most modern equipment. North Platte residents recently approved an \$886,000 bond issue for an elementary school expansion program which is now underway.





Both regions together produce thousands of head of beef cattle, feeding a local auction company a never-ending supply of Hereford, Angus and other sturdy breeds.

Dairies throughout the area, with milch cows totalling around 8,000, provide a perpetual supply of Grade A milk for many local and distant markets.

As an official slogan, North Platte has adopted "On the Main Street of America." This was prompted by the town's position as one of Nebraska's busiest transportation centers—made possible by the location of its parental industry, Union Pacific, and by the services of United

Symbolic of North Platte's rich historical background is this likeness of a Sioux lookout, erected by Lincoln County residents. It marks a point on the old Oregon Trail which ran nearby the present townsite.



Air Lines, three bus lines, a number of truck lines and two trans-continental highways which junction at North Platte.

These transcontinental lines are used by sportsmen and vacationers throughout the year, many of them seeking sport and recreation in the North Platte area. For the hunter in search of game, there are plenty of pheasant, prairie chicken and deer throughout the countryside and along the rivershed.

For the fisherman, reservoirs and streams of the Sutherland Project are stocked with pike, bass, crappie, trout and many other varieties of fish. These same waterways provide facilities for the boating and swimming enthusiast.

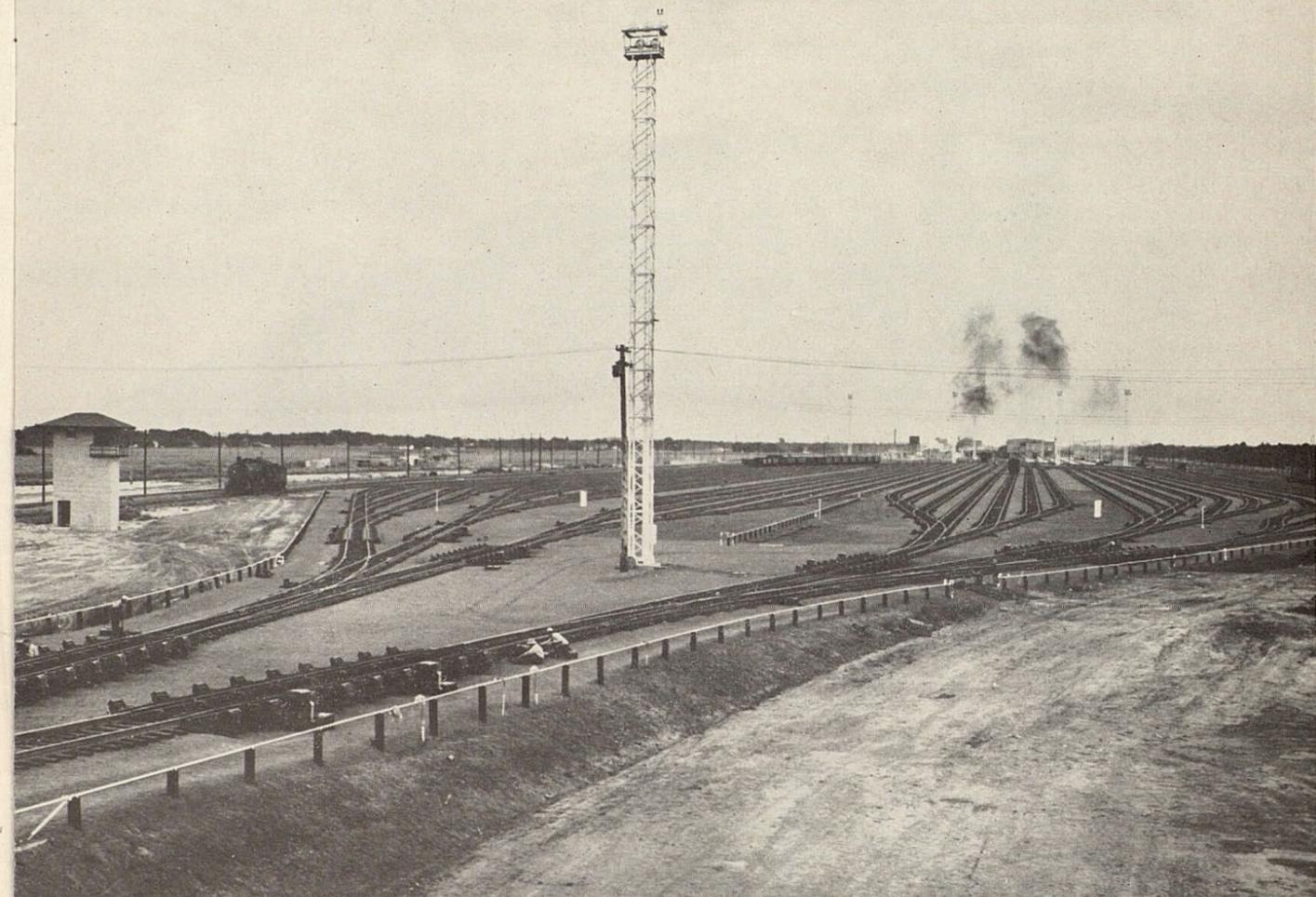
Sixteen miles southeast of North Platte is Fort McPherson, the site of an Army outpost during the time of the Oregon Trail. And three miles west of town is "Buffalo Bill's" Scouts Rest Ranch where he lived during his residence at North Platte.

The ranch is now a part of the Kuhlmann Ranch, where some of the region's best Hereford cattle are bred. Among the herd are three national grand champion bulls, the chief one being "Gold Mine," winner in Hereford shows throughout Nebraska, Wyoming, South Dakota and Missouri.

The College of Agriculture of the University of Nebraska operates a state agricultural experiment station south of North Platte. Founded in 1903, it comprises 2,300 acres of valley and table land. It is the only dry-land agricultural station in the state and one of the few in the nation.

Experiments are conducted throughout the year with special concentration on irrigation crops, feeding and breeding of Holstein and Hereford cattle, Durock Jersey hogs, Leghorn chickens, Corriedale sheep and Morgan horses. Studies also are being conducted on ornamental trees, flowers and other horticultural crops adaptable to the area.

North Platte's most outstanding industries, besides the railroad, include meat packing plants, livestock feed mills, dairy processing



North Platte is one of Nebraska's most important transportation centers, best demonstrated by this huge \$3,500,000 Union Pacific retarder yard. Recently constructed, the yard is five miles long and provides facilities for assembling freight trains speedily. Trains pass through the town at a rate of one an hour.

plants, rendering plants, produce houses and a radio parts manufacturing plant.

Close by are a number of alfalfa dehydration plants which contract that product in the field and prepare it for shipment in pellets and meal.

Many of these industries are old-timers who have grown with North Platte since its infancy. They stand as proof of the fact that North Platte is not a boom town, but rather a city which has always enjoyed a modest, but steady, growth with local business remaining on an even keel.

The continued progress of North Platte is

reflected in its many building projects. The city has recently launched an ambitious street-paving program while modern residential districts are being developed periodically.

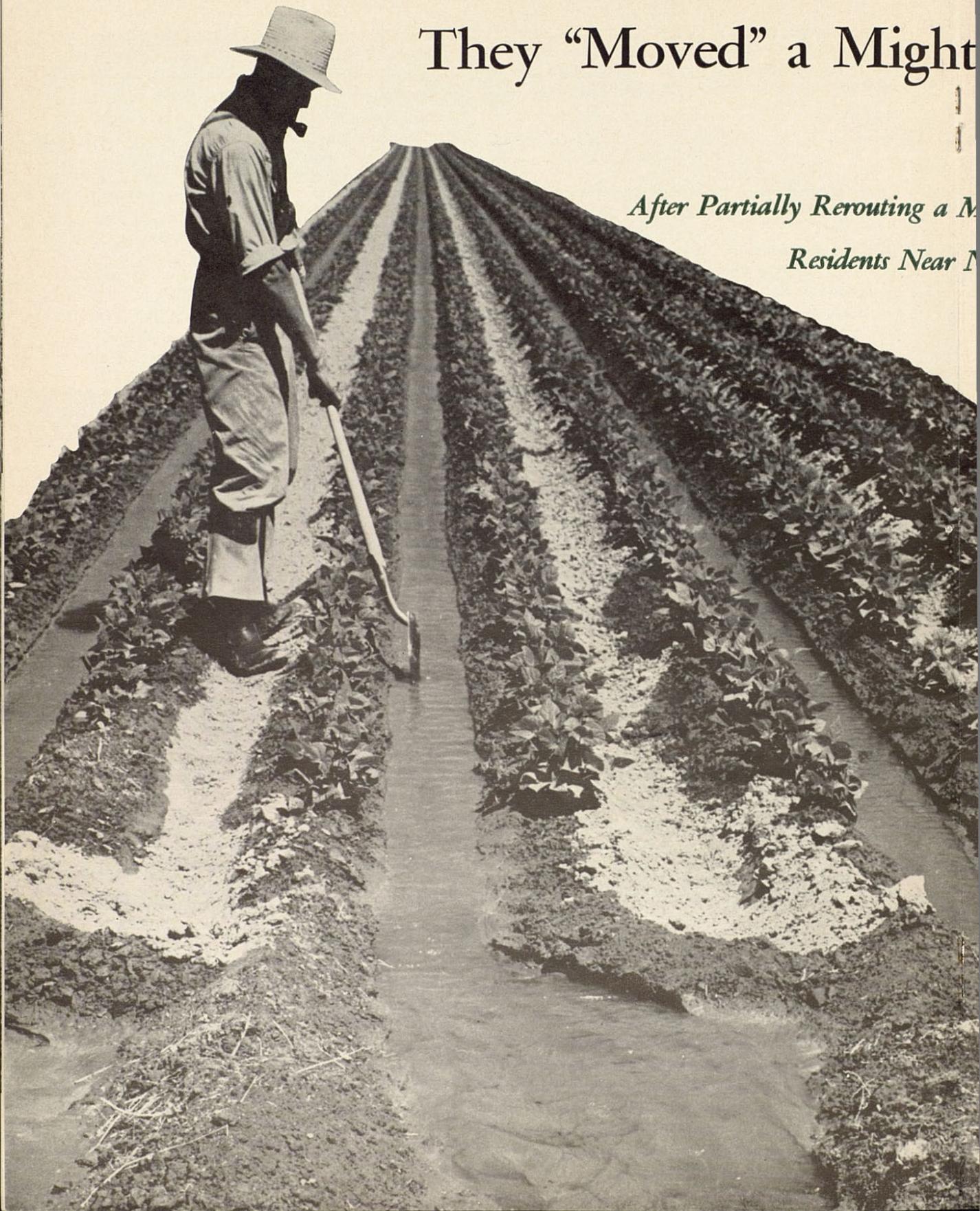
And the Union Pacific Railroad recently strengthened the city's position as a transportation center by constructing a \$3,500,000 retarder yard — a switching yard five miles long where transcontinental freight trains are assembled with unbelievable speed and accuracy.

The city received its most recent shot in the arm when a Denver contracting firm purchased a full downtown block for construction of business houses to suit long-term lessees.

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Residents Near I

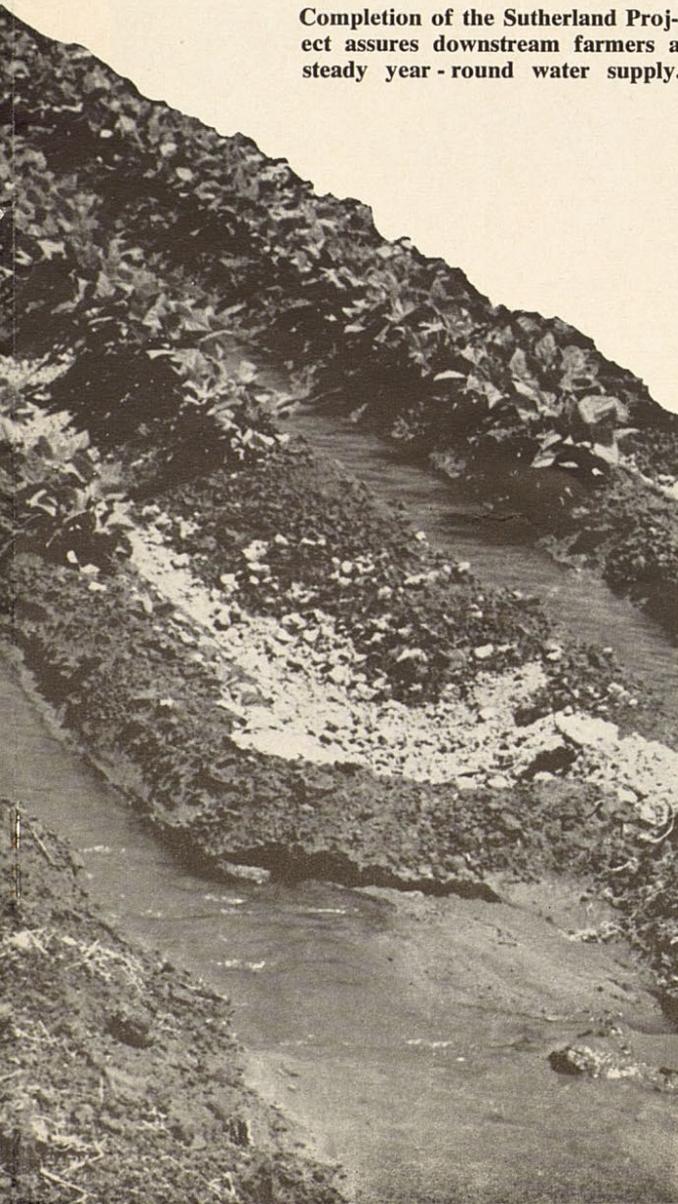


nty River

Major Nebraska Waterway

North Platte Enjoy Increased Prosperity

Completion of the Sutherland Project assures downstream farmers a steady year-round water supply.



TO nourish the rich, dry lands of western Nebraska near the town of North Platte, progressive citizens of the area have literally changed the course of one of the state's principal rivers. And in doing so, they have accomplished some unique tricks in the way of irrigation engineering.

To re-route part of the river, it was not only necessary that the man-made portion underpass a major railroad and a U.S. highway, but it also had to flow beneath another of the state's principal waterways, eventually to be emptied into this second river some 30 miles downstream.

This man-made waterway is the Sutherland Irrigation Project, constructed primarily for benefit of farmers south and east of the town of North Platte who draw irrigation waters from the Platte River.

Before the project was constructed, these agriculturists were in urgent need of supplemental water during dry summer months when the natural flow of the Platte was inadequate for their needs.

Receiving the major part of its supply from the North Platte River, the Sutherland Project diverts the water near the outlet of the river's Lake McConaughy, about 45 miles west of the city of North Platte.

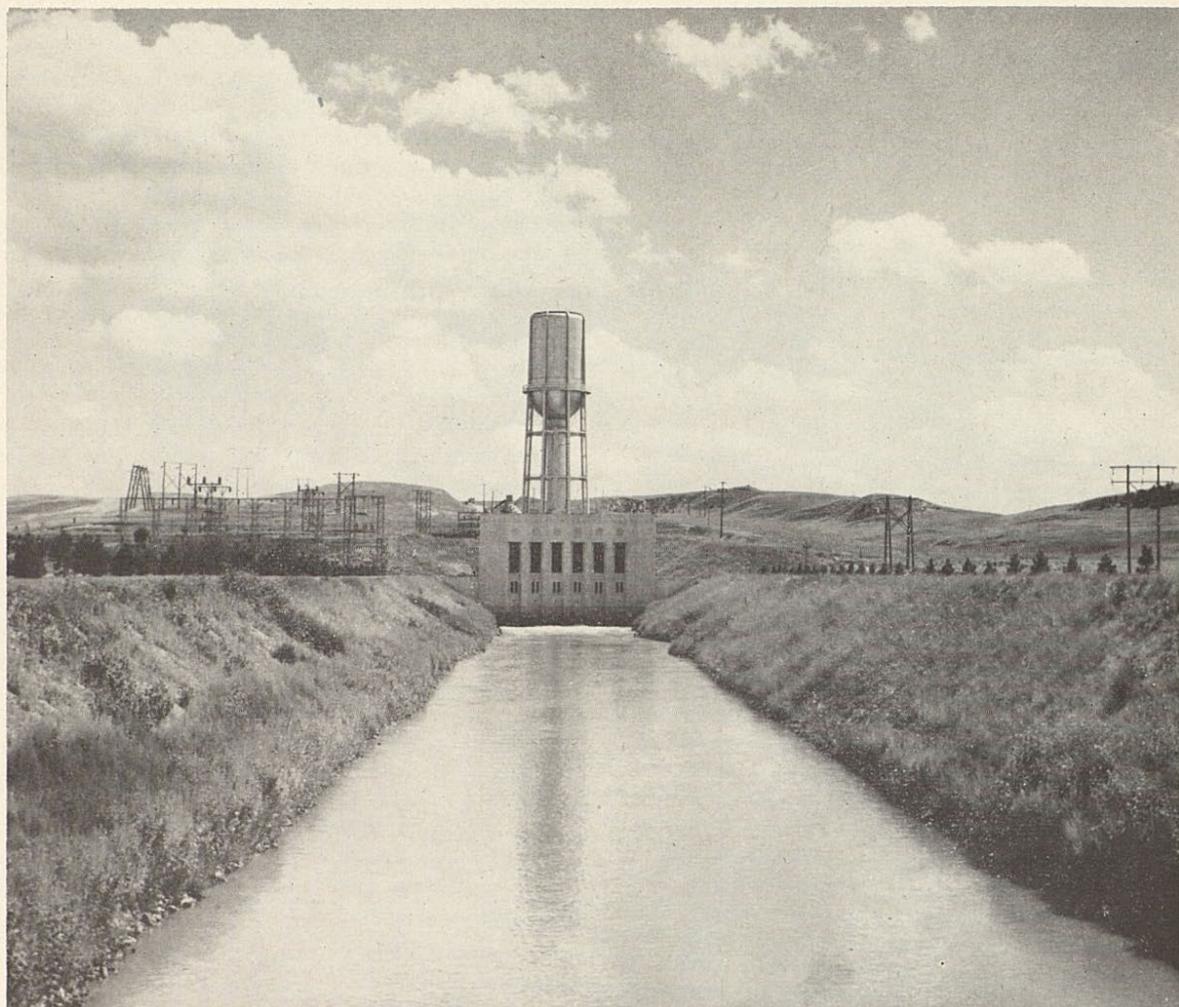
From that point the water travels through a canal eastward and southward. At one point in its journey, this artificial river plunges below the surface, coming up again after it has passed underneath the Union Pacific Railroad, U.S. Highway 30 and the South Platte River.

Afterwards, the waters flow through three man-made reservoirs and a hydroelectric unit before they are eventually emptied into the South Platte River at a point just south of the town of North Platte.

In addition to the main supply canals from the North Platte River, the project also includes a small supplemental connection to the South Platte River.

Waters of the North Platte River arise from the clear, cool mountain streams of the Wyoming Rockies, entering Nebraska near the center of the Nebraska-Wyoming border and continuing southeasterly until they converge with waters of the South Platte River.

The latter river originates in the Colorado Rockies and joins the northern river just east of the town of North Platte to form the principal Platte River.



Included in the North Platte Power Plant facilities are the power house at center and the transformer yard at left. Located behind the power house is a one million-gallon surge tank which takes care of irregularities in the flow of water. The tailrace, foreground, returns diverted waters to the South Platte River.

The Sutherland Project is one of several similar systems situated along the winding shores of the Platte Rivers, extending from the western state line to the wide Missouri River on the extreme east.

Of primary benefit to residents in the North Platte area, the Sutherland Project, like other units along the river, provides its beneficiaries with electrical power, irrigation and recreational facilities. It is made up of over 70 miles of man-made canals and waterways.

Construction on the project was begun in 1934 and completed in 1939. It was built on the knowledge that by diverting and storing

some of the North Platte's surplus waters, the Platte River's flow could be regulated by releasing water as it was needed by farmers downstream.

And by including a hydroelectric power unit, the power could be sold to pay for construction and upkeep of the project.

Since its completion, eight irrigation ditches, situated south and east of North Platte on the Platte River, have provided farmers with a substantial year-round supply of water for irrigation of their crops.

The North Platte Power House provides electrical power through its two 18,000 horse-

power generators driven by two hydraulic turbines. The output of these generators is fed to a transformer yard where the current is stepped up to required voltages for several transmission lines radiating from that point.

Also since completion of the project, the system's reservoirs and canals have become more and more popular as recreation spots. More and more out-of-staters are visiting the area seeking facilities for fishing, swimming and picnicking.

Each year, new private and rental cabins are being built, and thousands of trees planted in the early days of the project are now large

enough to provide plenty of shaded picnic spots.

Fishing is good on all lakes and waterways. A wall-eyed pike hatchery has been established at the power house, and streams are stocked with such varieties as northern pike, crappie, white bass, black bass, cat fish, bullheads and German brown and rainbow trout.

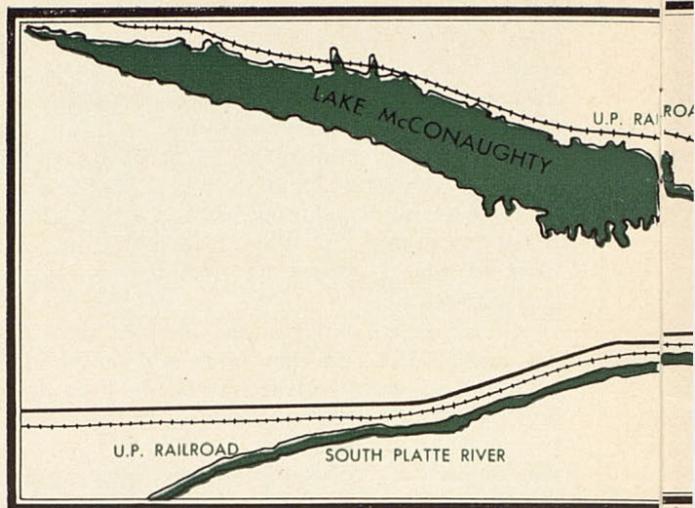
Lake Maloney, one of the large reservoirs of the project, has a relatively stable water supply and sloping sand beaches which make it ideal for year-round recreation.

The main supply canal of the Sutherland Project originates at a diversion dam near Keystone. It receives water from the North Platte

The Sutherland Project serves eight irrigation ditches connected with the Platte River east of the town of North Platte. Most of these are mutually owned and operated by farmers in the area. Before the project was constructed, these ditches were unable to fill needs of irrigators during the hot, dry summer months.



The project originates at Lake McConaughy, traveling eastward and southward under U.S. Highway 30, the Union Pacific Railroad and the South Platte River. Then, it is fed to the Sutherland Reservoir and Lake Maloney before it enters the power plant and eventually returns to the South Platte River. The project also draws water from the South Platte near Paxton.



River, directing it along the southern edge of the river for 17 miles eastward until it dives into a large concrete tube running underneath the highway, the railroad tracks and the South Platte River.

On the south side of the South Platte Valley, near the edge of a group of hills, this tube discharges the water once more into the supply canal. From this point, the canal continues eastward, gradually rising out of the valley and along 15 miles of smooth table lands until it empties into the Sutherland Reservoir.

This is the project's main storage reservoir where waters are held until needed further downstream. Located just south of Sutherland, Nebraska, the reservoir covers about nine square miles and is about 75 feet deep.

It releases the water through an outlet canal which carries it eastward 19 miles and discharges it in the system's regulating reservoir, now called Lake Maloney.

This lake has a maximum depth of 40 feet and covers about 1,670 acres. From here, water is released through a two-mile canal to the forebay, another reservoir on the bluffs overlooking the town of North Platte.

Covering about 80 acres, this reservoir feeds the water directly to the power house located at the foot of the bluffs. From the power plant, the water is emptied into the South Platte River via a 1½-mile tailrace.

In addition to these facilities, the project includes a one million gallon surge tank, placed

just over the power canal to take care of irregularities of water flow.

It also acts as a safety valve to cushion the shock on power generators in cases of sudden stoppage of water coming down the canal.

The small supplemental canal connected to the South Platte River was added to the Sutherland facilities in 1946.

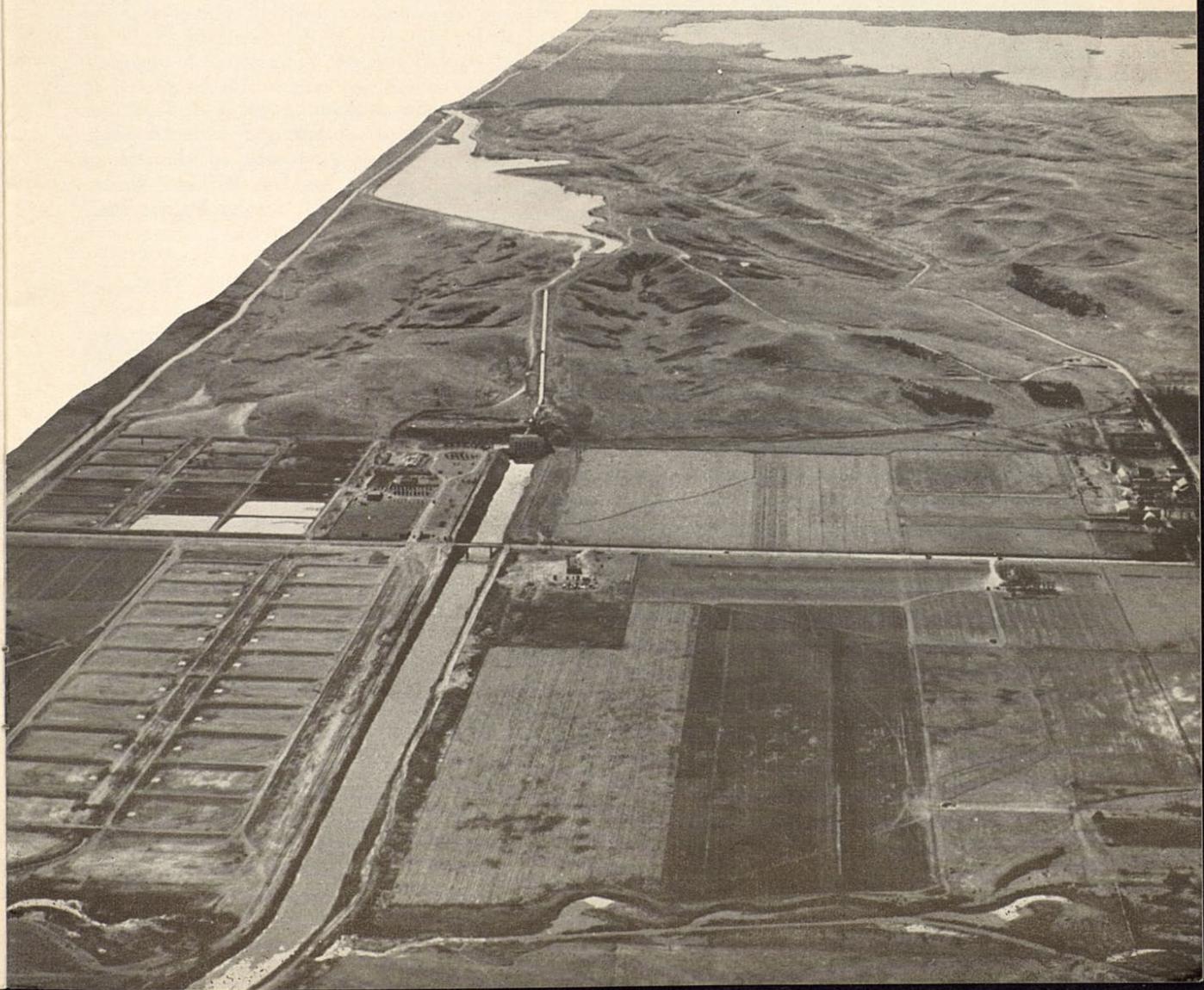
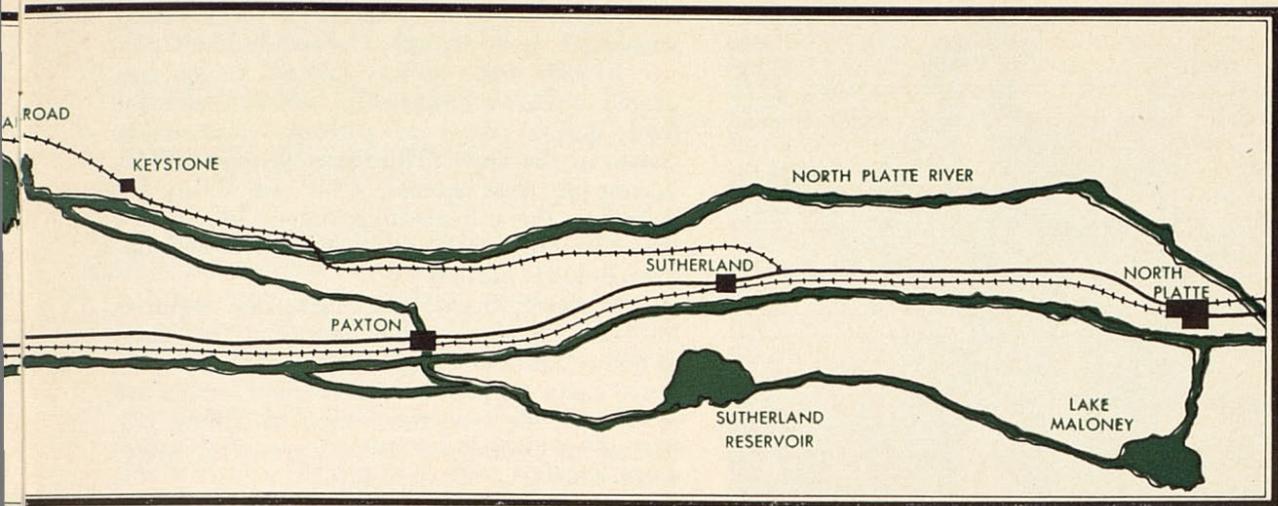
In addition to its value as a reserve, this canal also provides silt from the South Platte's spring runoff. This silt is used in sealing canals and reservoirs to prevent seepage along the Sutherland system.

After 14 years of operation, the Sutherland Project has become an integral part of the area it serves. The power and irrigation facilities have become so much a part of the way of life of residents in the area that its continued operation is essential.

And its importance as a recreational facility is gradually approaching that of its position as a ready supply of power and irrigation.



Lake Maloney, right background, is the project's regulating reservoir. From there, water is channeled to the forebay, left background, and down a chute to the power unit, at center. Once released, it travels along the tailrace, in foreground, until it is emptied into the South Platte River just east of North Platte.





"Buffalo Bill" Cody

On This Month's Cover

Appearing on this month's cover is a silhouette of William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody overlooking an aerial view of North Platte, Nebraska—the featured city in this issue of *The Shamrock*.

"Buffalo Bill," famous Indian scout, showman and Wild West hero, was for 30 years a popular resident of North Platte.

He maintained one of his large cattle ranches 65 miles north of the Nebraska town, and only three miles west is the site of his home, "Scouts Rest Ranch."

During his residence at North Platte, Cody was the town's most famous citizen, and he is best remembered by residents today for the Wild West Show he organized there in 1884. First presented at North Platte, the show soon became a top attraction in towns and cities throughout the world.

"Buffalo Bill" acquired his famous nickname for one of his best known skills—that of hunting wild buffalo. He had become adept

at the sport during his younger days as mounted messenger, pony express rider and Indian scout.

In 1867 when he was only 21, he was employed by a food contractor to hunt and deliver buffalo meat to railway construction camps in the west. The name was given him during this time because of his rare ability for delivering the animals in extremely large numbers. In only 18 months, he killed and delivered 4,280 buffalo.

However, shortly after Cody had acquired his name, another Indian scout by the name of Billy Comstock claimed right to it. He contested Cody to shoot for the title and a side bet of \$500. Cody won the contest by killing 121 buffalo to Comstock's 94 and was ever afterwards known as "Buffalo Bill."

"Buffalo Bill" was born in 1846 near Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and died in 1916 at Denver, Colorado.

CREDITS — Cover photo, pages 3, 4, 5, 11 and 12, Brown-Horano Studio and Camera Shop, North Platte; pages 2, 3 and 13, Bureau of Reclamation; pages 6 and 14, Willson Studio, North Platte; and page 7, Union Pacific Railroad Company.

Corrections

While preparing the Canyon, Texas, article appearing in *The Shamrock* of November-December, the staff became confused in its thinking and came up with some garbled directions.

It was erroneously stated in that issue of the magazine that the Palo Duro Canyons were to the west of Canyon and Buffalo Lake to the east. These directions should have been reversed. Also, the West Texas State campus is in the northeast part of town rather than the northwest, as stated.

The *Shamrock* staff duly apologizes to anyone who may have been inconvenienced by these directional quirks, and it hereby resolves to use a more accurate compass when preparing future issues.

Shamrock Opens First Nebraska Station at North Platte Site

Shamrock's familiar green and white emblem has entered Nebraska!

The company's products were introduced to residents of that state December 18 with the formal opening of its first Nebraska station in North Platte, Nebraska.

Operated by Jim Casady as Casady's Shamrock station, it is situated just east of the city limits on U.S. Highway 30. The station carries a complete line of Shamrock products as well as Goodyear tires, batteries and accessories.

In addition to service station facilities, the building also includes a modern cafe operated by M. R. McEwen. Both operators are former residents of La Junta, Colorado, Casady having been a Shamrock station operator at that point.

The North Platte station and cafe will be open 24 hours a day for convenience of truckers, tourists and other motorists.

Located just east of North Platte on U.S. Highway 30 is Shamrock's new combination cafe-service station.



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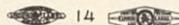
C. R. BOWEN, Editorial Director
MARVIN GWINN, Editor
T. C. BROWN, Associate Editor



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