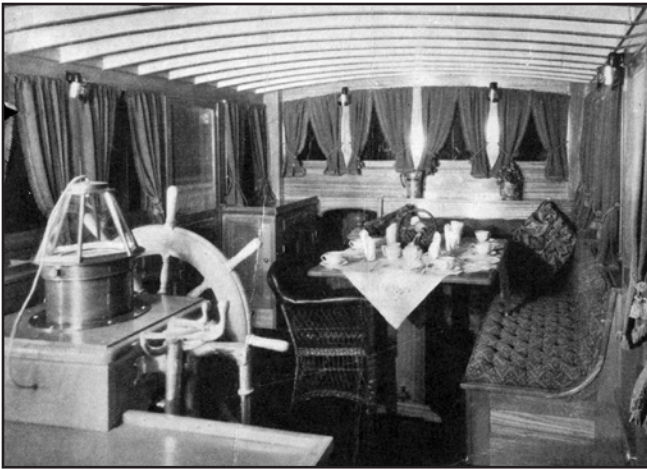
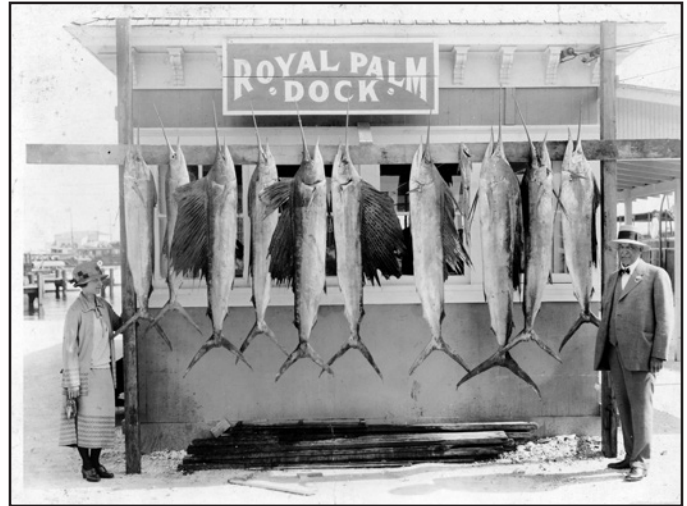


[Return to Part 1](#)


RIGHT ABOVE: [FIG. 33] Yacht EMWAL, at Miami Florida, c. 1930, Emma and Charles Hires on aft deck. RIGHT CENTER: [FIG. 35] Charles E. Hires with his youngest daughter Clara, Miami, Florida, c. 1925–30 RIGHT BELOW: [FIG. 37] Charles E. Hires fishing with his sons Edgar, Harrison, Charles, c. 1900–10. LEFT ABOVE: [FIG. 34] Unidentified magazine clipping of an EMWAL interior view. LEFT BELOW: [FIG. 36] Charles E. Hires, Jr., Harrison S. Hires, J. Edgar Hires, Atlantic City or Ocean City, New Jersey, c.1905–15. All images from the author's collection.



For many years the Hires spent summer months in Atlantic City or Ocean City—both patronized by leading Quaker families. They also had a comfortable motor yacht—the *EMWAL*—for cruising along the East Coast, and in the winter it would be berthed in Florida—mainly Miami. (figs 33-34) Charles Hires, an enthusiastic fisherman, especially liked the pursuit of marlin and tarpon.<sup>20</sup> (fig. 35) He also fished in Cuba when visiting the company plantations.



## NEXT GENERATION (the brothers)

### Harrison S. Hires (1887-1962)

I am taking the next generation out of chronological order instead looking at them based on when they moved to Tredyffrin Township. Harrison, a graduate of Haverford College, served as Vice President of the Hires Company for many years, but his greater interest lay in writing, especially poetry. He and his wife Christine (Leland) led somewhat artistic lives (or they would have been viewed as fairly progressive at the time), and he published a number of books of poetry.<sup>21</sup> By 1920 they were living on Orchard Way in Berwyn—possibly a lease-- and in a few years would purchase 50 acres on Cassatt Road—a tract owned by the Cassatt family. That area was still largely undeveloped and the road led down the long hill from Conestoga Road to Chesterbrook Farm.



[FIG. 38] Harrison and Christine Hires residence, on Cassatt Road, Berwyn, PA, c. 1935, author's collection



This was the time of the first big wave of people moving out to the country for year-round residences, moving beyond the inner ring suburbs as they became more developed. In many cases they followed friends or family to the area. Harrison and Christine commissioned his Haverford College classmate E.N. Edwards of the firm Edwards & Hoffman to design a substantial stone house of 6 bedrooms and 4 ½ baths, with sunken living room.<sup>22</sup> (fig. 38) It was Cotswold-inspired and had arts and crafts interiors. Sitting heavily on its hilltop, it looked out towards Valley Forge Mountain. Massive stones of a warm brown color characterized the design. Named "Overlook," it can still be seen on Cassatt Road, surrounded by houses built in the 1960s and 70s. (fig. 39) They would raise their three children—William, Christine and Wesley in the house, then moving in the 1950s to Andover Road in Haverford for their later years. (fig. 40—Hires family gathering)

### Charles Elmer Hires, Jr. (1891-1980)

Although the youngest son, Charles Jr. was the most involved in the company and was his father's successor, becoming President in 1925. He led it through a period of modernization and expansion.<sup>23</sup> (fig. 41) In the 1930s the noted industrial designer Norman Bel Geddes revamped the overall brand appearance giving the bottle its distinctive shape with its ribbing, broad orange stripe, large brown circle and modern style font.<sup>24</sup> (figs. 42-43) Sponsorship of radio broadcasts expanded the advertising reach. In the 1950s the attempt to reach a new audience continued as they added TV advertising and used celebrity endorsers like Bob Hope. Locally they sponsored TV shows such as Sally Starr. Additional Hires bottling plants were being built around the country; the soda's popularity was strong and root beer firmly embedded in American popular culture.

About the time Charles, Jr. became President of the company he and his wife Ilse (Keppelmann) built a large rambling, stone house on Remington Road in Wynnewood. He also chose the architects who designed his brother Harrison's house—Edwards & Hoffman. (figs. 44-45) This is a more refined essay in the English style, elegantly furnished with American and English antiques.<sup>25</sup> By 1937 he had followed his brother out towards the Great Valley, purchasing 62 acres on a curve in Yellow Springs



UPPER: [FIG. 39] Recent view of Harrison Hires residence, on Cassatt Road, Berwyn, PA, 2015 photograph by the author. LOWER: [FIG. 40] Hires family gathering at the Harrison Hires residence, c. 1923-25. J. Edgar, Harrison, and Charles, Jr. standing in the rear, Emma and Charles, Sr. seated in the middle, surrounded by other family members. Author's collection.



[FIG. 41] Charles E. Hires, Jr. and his wife Ilse Keppelmann, detail from family photo above.



[FIG. 42-43] The new Hires Root Beer bottle designed by Norman Bel Geddes and featured in a 1937 advertisement, author's collection



Road close to the land owned by the Hires Company. (figs. 46-47) Nearby were the farms of people he knew from the business world or the Quaker community including the Woolmans, and his friend and Hires Company board member, lawyer George Orr who lived at Willow Brook Farm on North Valley Road.<sup>26</sup>

I have not yet identified the architect of the seven bedroom Pennsylvania farmhouse style residence and outbuildings. It has the look of Brognard Okie, but does not appear in his list of commissions or those of Edwin Brumbaugh, who also was a master of that style. It featured a spring fed swimming pool and tennis courts. It was the quintessential Chester County country house where they raised their three sons. Not too formal; rather comfortable.



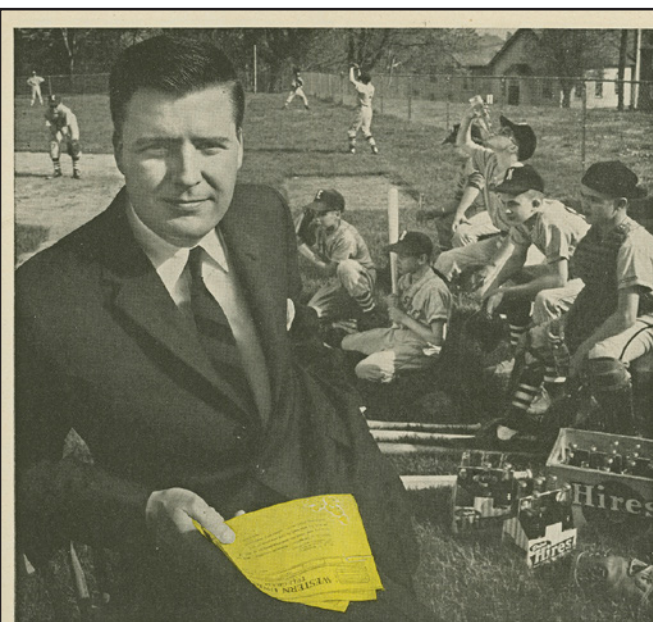
[FIG. 44] Charles and Ilse Hires residence, Remington Road, Wynnewood, PA, *The Architectural Record*, July, 1928



Recent views of the former Charles E. Hires, Jr. residence (ABOVE [FIG. 45]) and gate house (LEFT [FIG. 46]), Yellow Springs Road, Malvern, Pennsylvania. 2015 photographs by the author.

Charles was interviewed for the radio show, “This I Believe” in the 1950s and characterized his approach to life. “I believe that satisfaction in living depends upon the worth of our living, for we either take from our fellow men or give ourselves to them.”<sup>27</sup> To him individual success was doing for others and using your creative talents. After the death of his wife in 1949 he increasingly spent time at other houses he owned in Guatemala and Arizona.

In the next generation, Charles E. Hires III—known as Bud—was very outgoing, community minded and seemed happiest around machinery and equipment. For many years he owned Hires & Kocher Tires on Lancaster Avenue in Paoli.<sup>28</sup> He and his family lived on part of his parents’ property on Yellow Springs Road. Robert was the academic in the family, a respected physicist who lived in Maryland. Peter worked his way up through the Hires Company and became President in 1958, a very challenging time with much change in the beverage industry and more competition. (figs. 48) Some experimentation in other flavors--grape and orange—was tried but root beer remained the core product. In 1959 new regulations posed a major dilemma. Sassafras was labeled a potential carcinogen and banned.<sup>29</sup> But this was the key ingredient and a substitution changed the formula and taste. Opposition to artificial flavors had long been a hallmark of company policy. Like many family companies,



**Telegram-minded:** Peter Hires, youthful President of Charles E. Hires Co., directs regional sales promotions by lightning-fast Western Union Telegrams. And the telegram is a written record . . . no mistake about it!





the younger generation either was not as involved, nor as committed to continued ownership. So a decision was made to sell and in 1960 it was purchased by Consolidated Foods. At that time there were 350 franchised bottlers in the United States and Canada; also in many other countries. 1962 saw it resold to Crush International and then Proctor & Gamble bought Crush in 1980. In 1989 Cadbury-Schweppes was the purchaser and it is now owned by the Dr. Pepper/Seagram Group.<sup>30</sup>

After the sale of the company Peter owned a mail/printing house and then later a travel agency. At some point he became very interested in the story of Tibet and the Dalai Lama. I wonder if in part it is a reflection of the values his father discussed in that "This I Believe" piece he recorded. In 1995 Peter undertook a month long trek to see the Dalai Lama and became a supporter of the Free Tibet cause.<sup>31</sup>

### John Edgar Hires (1885-1951)

I'll conclude the story with my grandparents, and it was their farm Rehoboth I remember visiting as a child. Unlike his brothers, J. Edgar Hires did not attend Haverford College, choosing instead Swarthmore where he graduated with a degree in engineering. This would always be his main interest, and although a Vice President of the Hires Company, he had his own consulting engineering firm, Hires, Castner & Harris which developed automation machinery. After graduation from college he worked on several dam and bridge projects for the U.S. government and met his future wife Thura Helen Colby Truax in North Dakota. (figs. 49) They married in 1910 and settled back near Philadelphia. Edgar Hires became more involved with the affiliated Hires Company businesses, especially the milk company, and also regularly went to Cuba to oversee the sugar plantations. They had three children, Charles Edgar, Emma Jacqueline, and Thura Truax.

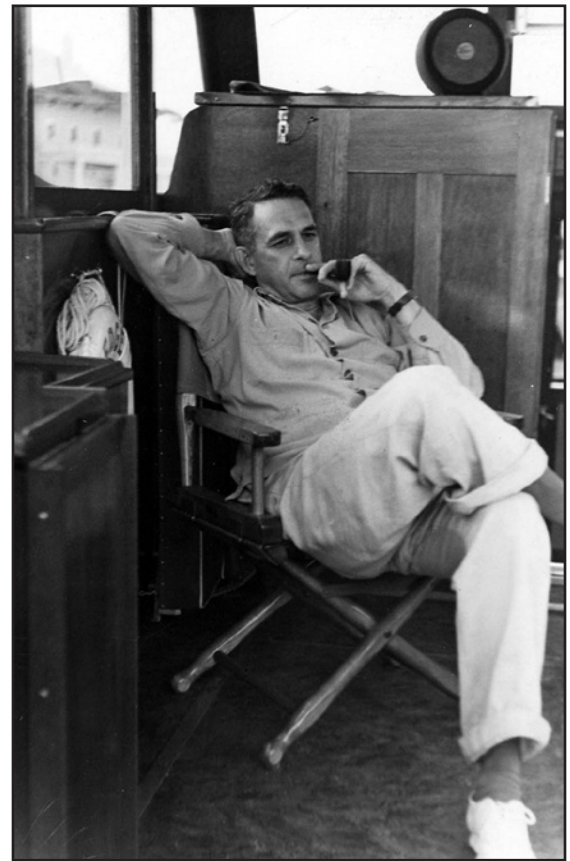
They moved around frequently in earlier years to where milk plants were located, but by 1915 had settled in Langhorne. Their first move to the Main Line came with the purchase of a large Tudor style house in Ardmore on Linwood Avenue. (figs. 50) Thura Hires had become a passionate horticulturist and plants woman and at the Ardmore house created a notable garden featuring iris and peonies. (figs. 51) Her main love was iris and by 1930 she had become President of the American Iris Society and over the years wrote articles on that plant including one for *Country Life* magazine.<sup>32</sup> Besides flowers, she was a major collector of 18th and 19th century dolls (donated to Chester County Historical Society after her death), a tireless family genealogist, and an advocate and lobbyist for American Indian rights.<sup>33</sup> (fig. 52)

OPPOSITE: [FIG. 48] Peter Hires, Western Union advertisement, 1958.

UPPER: [FIG. 49] Thura T. Hires and J. Edgar Hires leaving St. Peters Church in the Great Valley after the marriage of their daughter Thura to Capt. Lewis L. Schock, USN, 1947. CENTER: [FIG. 50] Thura T. Hires and J. Edgar Hires residence, Linwood Road, Ardmore, Pennsylvania, 2014 photograph by the author. LOWER: [FIG. 51] Iris garden at the Linwood Road residence, c. 1937. All from the author's collection







BEHOBETH







UPPER LEFT: [FIG. 57] Rehobeth viewed from Swedesford Road, 1942.  
 LOWER LEFT: [FIG. 58] Dredging the pond, c. 1940, the old stone forge by the trees in the near distance. ABOVE: [FIG. 59] Rehobeth, leaving for the wedding of Thura Hires to Lewis L. Schock, 1947.  
 BELOW: [FIG. 60-61] Rehobeth, auction brochure, 1956.

All from the author's collection

ONE OF THE FINEST REAL ESTATE BUYING OPPORTUNITIES EVER OFFERED  
 BY THE ESTATE OF MRS. J. EDGAR HIRES, deceased

**"Rehobeth" OVERLOOKING VALLEY FORGE**

**A HANDSOME 63 ACRE ESTATE**  
 STEEPED IN HISTORICAL CHARM, MAINTAINED IN MODERN DECOR  
 SWEDSFORD ROAD (ROUTE #202) & OLD EAGLE SCHOOL ROAD  
 TREDYFFRIN TOWNSHIP, CHESTER COUNTY, PA.

**BUILDERS! DEVELOPERS! SPECULATORS!**  
 SEE PLOT PLAN ON BACK PAGE  
 NOTE  
 WATER AVAILABLE

Looking across the pond at the Main residence presents a picturesque view. Below is shown a portion of a delightful winding path leading up to residence and other buildings.

As 6 Parcels or Entirety at

**EXECUTORS AUCTION**

CLEAR OF MORTGAGE! IMMEDIATE POSSESSION!

PARCELS  
 NO. 1—Residence, 15 acres ±, other bldgs.  
 NO. 2—Tenant House, 1 acre ±  
 NO. 3—11 Acre Tract  
 NO. 4—3 Acre Tract  
 NO. 5—12 Acre Tract  
 NO. 6—20 Acre Tract

VARIOUS ITEMS OF FURNITURE & FARM EQUIPMENT INCLUDING TRACTOR

SALE WILL BE HELD ON THE PREMISES, RAIN OR SHINE

**SUN., APRIL 29 2 TO 5 P.M.**

**SATURDAY, MAY 5, 1956, AT 12 NOON**

**Louis Traiman AUCTION COMPANY**  
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Here is an opportunity for which you have been waiting. It is seldom that such a fine country estate as well located as this is put on the Auction Market. A tract of ground that so well lends itself to many uses, such as a fine, large convenient estate, a small, handsome estate and several building tracts, excellent site for a new home and all within ideal access to the Expressway, turnpike and new expanding markets. Inspect it! Note all its wonderful possibilities for good living and good profit, then attend the Sale prepared to BID and BUY WHEN THE AUCTIONEER TAKES THE BIDS.

**PARCEL NO. 1 RESIDENCE—GUEST HOUSE BARN—POND—15 ACRES ±**

Handsome Georgian Residence with a commanding view

Set back and partially hidden from the road, this gorgeous Georgian residence takes a commanding view of the valley. Glittering white plaster over heavy stone walls, a series of wide stone steps lead up to an attractive wide brick terrace on front and side surrounded by beautiful landscape. A wide and impressive center hall, straight through, with alcove phone room, powder room, door to side drive, convenient "Elevator" to 2nd floor, large living room, fireplace, library or den, built-in bookshelves, fireplace, dining room, fireplace, French doors to patio, pantry, double drainboard, double bowl, stainless steel sink, General Electric dishwasher, floor to ceiling cabinets, large kitchen, double drainboard and double bowl steel sink, Chamber 6 burner, 2 oven range, steel hood, exhaust fan, 2 closets, rear stairs, walk-in closet, door to garage, door to yard. Wide open landing staircase to 2nd floor, 3 rooms, 2 baths, hall, servants' wing, 4 rooms, bath, linen closet, built-in drawers, and shelves. Large attic space with built-in cedar lined walk-in closet. Basement, oil fired steam heat, Gould jet pump, Laundry room, 500 gallon water storage tank, 80 gallon Electric water heater, water softener, copper tubing.

**GUEST HOUSE.** White plaster matching main house. Huge living room, with massive fireplace, built-in bookshelves, random width pegged floor. 2nd floor: 2 rooms, bath. **STONE AND FRAME BARN.** Barn, garage space, machinery storage shed (enclosed), tack room, lavatory, 4 box stalls and 4 straight walls, oil hot water heat, summer-winter hookup, circular, huge room, concrete floor, walled in barn yard. 2nd floor: 2 hay mow, feed storage room, 2 drive-in floors, work shop and hobby room and small wood paneled room with bath, stall shower, corn crib. Stone 2 story, 2 room old forge house. Underground wiring for electric and telephones.

A most delightful masonry guest house

Quaint Old Stone Forge Shop or Barbecue

View showing compact group of buildings

View of handsome barn—walled in run yard

Parcel No. 2—Tenant House 1 Acre ±

Below is an overall view showing all the buildings and beautiful scenery taken from the road.

food and socializing, when Thura died in 1955, the family felt they could not keep it and in 1956 it was auctioned, sold in multiple parcels. (figs. 60-62) I often wonder how its fate might have been different. The main parcel with the house, guest house, garden, and barn was auctioned off to Lizanne LeVine, the sister of Grace Kelly, who planned on using it as a home. But the process of the auction allowed for a subsequent bidder to buy the entire property and a man named Richter purchased it for investment and future development.<sup>36</sup> Although one of a handful of historic sites on the Tredyffrin Township historic register, it sat empty and forlorn for many years, slowly crumbling, becoming overgrown, and being vandalized by neighborhood kids who used it as a hangout. In 1976, it burned and was subsequently demolished.<sup>37</sup>



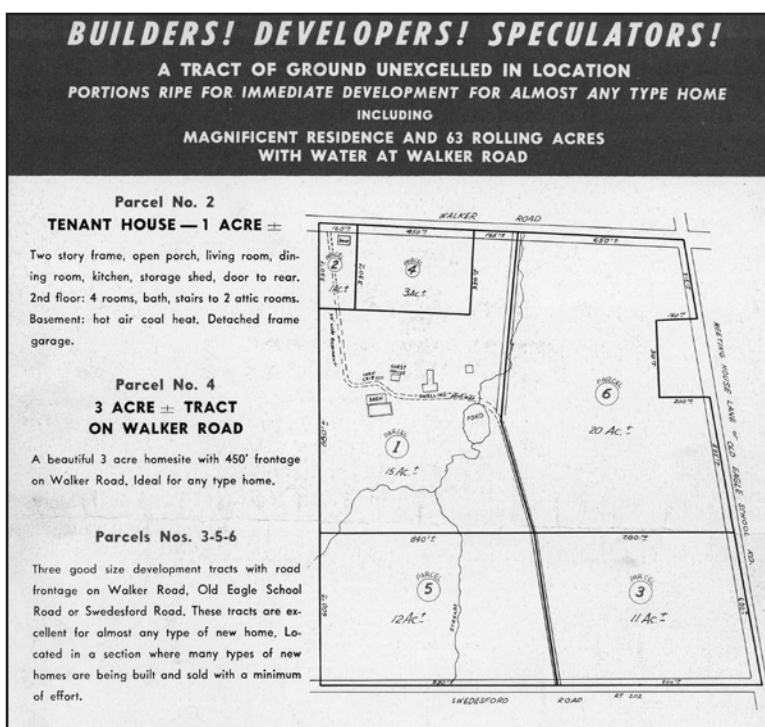
If there is something to take the edge off the story, it is that very little of the 18th century house was left after so many years of remodeling and restoration. But it was a beautiful and gracious house, and a prime example of the homes that defined this area in the 1920s-50s as desirable country places. Its decline is also symbolic of the rapid change along the Route 202 corridor that began in the 1950s. Eventually corporate offices were built on the land, but the foundations of the house may still be in the overgrown tangle of land that will also soon be developed. The Quaker burial ground for Valley Friends Meeting still is carefully preserved as it tucks into the east side of the Rehobeth parcel.

What about the two daughters of Charles and Kate Hires? They are not featured in my story because they did not live in Tredyffrin or Easttown, but I would be remiss to leave them out, as both were very accomplished. Linda, the eldest, graduated from Wellesley College and trained in architecture at the Cambridge School of Architecture and the University of Pennsylvania. Clara studied botany at Cornell and became known as a somewhat controversial figure in the study of ferns, overseeing a research laboratory at her residence in Millburn, New Jersey. (figs. 65)

So to conclude, my story is a representative one about Philadelphia after the Civil War. Many talented and ambitious men, usually of modest backgrounds, turned with entrepreneurial zeal to manufacturing, industry, transportation, and to retailing. Many were from Quaker families, and many became Episcopalian (or moved back and forth between Meeting and Church as did members of the Hires family), but Quaker values remained central to their lives.

When the eastern Main Line started becoming too built up, they moved further west into Chester County, restoring older houses or building new, old houses. It was a small world of people who shared many ties and along with the older families of the Great Valley loved the land and the relatively low key life. And finally it is a story of rapid growth and development and change in the 1960s and 70s that dramatically transformed this area.

I would especially like to thank Bill Double whose book on Charles E. Hires will be coming out in the near future and acknowledge the comprehensive research and writing on Hires Condensed Milk done by the late Nancy Schmitt.



[FIG. 62] Rehobeth, auction brochure, 1956, from author's collection



[FIG. 65] A Hires family gathering in 1956. Second row from the top, left to right, Charles E. Hires, Jr., Linda Hires; Harrison Hires, Christine Hires, Clara Hires. from author's collection

Jeff Groff is a member of the Hires family, grandson of J. Edgar Hires, and son of his daughter Emma Jacqueline, always known as Jacqueline. He is currently employed as Director of Interpretation & Estate Historian at Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library near Wilmington, Delaware. Jeff served on the Tredyffrin Township Historical Architectural Review Board, is a valued member of TEHS, and has previously written for the *Quarterly*.

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