

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	
COUNTY:	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
JAN 18 1973	

1. NAME																		
<p>COMMON: <u>Como Bluff</u></p> <p>AND/OR HISTORIC: <u>Como Bluff Historic - Paleontologic Site</u></p>																		
2. LOCATION																		
<p>STREET AND NUMBER: <u>On U. S. 30, Albany-Carbon County boundary line, southeast Wyoming</u></p> <p>CITY OR TOWN: <u>Between the towns of Rock River and Medicine Bow</u></p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>STATE</td><td>CODE</td><td>COUNTY:</td><td>CODE</td></tr> <tr><td><u>Wyoming</u></td><td><u>56</u></td><td><u>Albany and Carbon</u></td><td><u>001-007</u></td></tr> </table>					STATE	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE	<u>Wyoming</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>Albany and Carbon</u>	<u>001-007</u>						
STATE	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE															
<u>Wyoming</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>Albany and Carbon</u>	<u>001-007</u>															
3. CLASSIFICATION																		
<table border="1"> <tr><td colspan="3">CATEGORY (Check One)</td></tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Building</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Public</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Site</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Structure</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Private</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3"><input type="checkbox"/> Object</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both</td> </tr> </table>	CATEGORY (Check One)			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District	<input type="checkbox"/> Building	<input type="checkbox"/> Public	<input type="checkbox"/> Site	<input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Private	<input type="checkbox"/> Object			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both			OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
	CATEGORY (Check One)																	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District	<input type="checkbox"/> Building	<input type="checkbox"/> Public																
<input type="checkbox"/> Site	<input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Private																
<input type="checkbox"/> Object																		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both																		
	<p>Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Being Considered </p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress </p>	<p>Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No </p>															
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)																		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	Comments														
4. OWNER OF PROPERTY																		
<p>OWNER'S NAME: <u>Addendum attached</u></p> <p>STREET AND NUMBER:</p> <p>CITY OR TOWN:</p>																		
			STATE:	CODE														
5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION																		
<p>COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:</p> <p>STREET AND NUMBER:</p> <p>CITY OR TOWN:</p>																		
			STATE:	CODE														
6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS																		
<p>TITLE OF SURVEY: <u>Wyoming Recreation Commission, Survey of Historic Sites, Markers, & Mon.</u></p> <p>DATE OF SURVEY: <u>DEC 18 1971</u></p> <p>DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: <u>Wyoming Recreation Commission</u></p> <p>STREET AND NUMBER: <u>604 East 25th Street</u></p> <p>CITY OR TOWN: <u>Cheyenne</u></p>																		
			STATE:	CODE														
			Wyoming	56														
FOR NPS USE ONLY																		

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

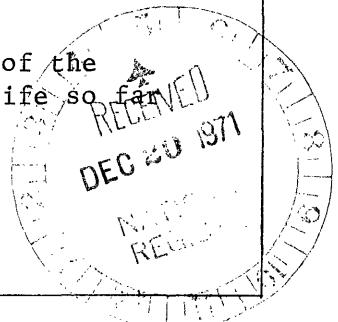
At this time, approximating the 50th to the 60th century of mankind's historic age, the natural scene at Como Bluff is one typifying those locales where the High Plains and the Rocky Mountains join in a meeting. The area in which Como Bluff rises as a medium sized but longish and not very high hill is, and has historically been, known as the Laramie Plains. However, the Laramie Plains is really a broad almost completely mountain girt valley which only opens to a vaster plains system along its northwestern perimeter. Como Bluff stands centrally located in the northern section of this valley; by western idiom it should be named a ridge rather than a hill as it extends, longitudinally, across some six miles from east to west although its height rises little more than four hundred feet above the immediate surroundings. This ridge, like similar ridges commonly standing in front---or between---many western mountain ranges is an anticline, the result of folding pressures which are also responsible for the cumulative rise of the major mountain chains themselves. In the case of Como Bluff this folding results in a gradually rounding rise as it is seen from the south, its backside; but the north side, its face, is much more abrupt and in some places presents an escarpment-like aspect.

Thus the physical appearance of Como Bluff is similar to any of numerous minor ridge systems which stand before, behind or between many major ranges of the Rocky Mountain Chain. If, as is the case with Como Bluff, one side of such a ridge is smoothly rounded while the other side is abrupt and broken, that is probably in part due to faulting and in part due to erosion. But how much is caused by the one geologic action and how much is caused by the other is best understood through the trained eye of the geologist.

Geologists have also told us that, because of fluctuations between the powers of erosion and folding, the Rocky Mountains have several times arisen and several times been leveled.

In the present geologic age the Laramie Plains is located within the Temperate Zone but, because of its greater than seven thousand feet elevation, the average mean yearly temperature is somewhat on the frigid side of what is generally considered a temperate climate. Thus contemporary climatic conditions differ sharply from conditions that prevailed during the geologist's Cretaceous and Jurassic timetable periods of from seventy to one hundred and eighty million years ago. At that time the Laramie Plains basked under a Torrid Zone climate and, itself, presented a flat, sea-coast type, marshland aspect. This favorable, in fact ideal, circumstance resulted in a proliferation of animal life wherein species representing the reptile class achieved a spectacular maturation.

Here then, on the Laramie Plains and within that time period of the Mesozoic Era, there developed the greatest reptilian animal life so far

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SIGNIFICANCE**PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)**

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)**AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)**

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi.
losophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human-
itarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |

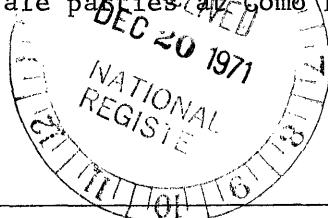
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

If it is indeed true that Como Bluff once (during the 19th century) captured a world wide interest that circumstance was due to a man named Marsh.

O. C. Marsh was a scientist who lived during the early development---at least early American development---of geology as a true natural science and who significantly contributed to that development. He received much of his youthful education from Yale College (graduating there in 1860) and through further study on the European Continent. In 1865 he returned to Yale to assume a professorship of paleontology---the first such post to exist in America. His uncle, a multi-millionaire named George Peabody, not only provided for the building of the Museum of Natural History at Yale but also liberally contributed toward the collections which went into that museum. Since a large measure of Peabody's contributions were entrusted to Marsh, he was able to make almost whatever extent of fossil collections that suited his inspiration. And, at Como Bluff, Marsh was unusually inspired.

How this circumstance worked out to make Como Bluff a significant historical spot is best told by John H. Ostrom and John S. McIntosh in their book Marsh's Dinosaurs. To quote from those pages:

In a very real sense, a rather ordinary looking locale in southern Wyoming, commonly known as Como Bluff, had an extraordinary influence on the development, both philosophical and architectural, of many of the great museums of the New World, and probably on the principal museums in Europe as well. Short of the original gift by George Peabody to Yale College in 1866, it would be difficult to cite a more significant event in the hundred years of Peabody Museum's history than the discovery of this particular ridge. Como Bluff was the site of the first major discovery of dinosaur remains anywhere in the world. From this place were collected many of the fine skeletons now displayed in the Peabody Museum at Yale, the National Museum of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D. C., and the American Museum of Natural History in New York. Discoveries by Yale parties at Como Bluff



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Ostrom, John H. and McIntosh, John S. Marsh's Dinosaurs. New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1966.

Ransom, Jay Ellis. Fossils in America. Harper and Row, N.Y., 1964.

Simpson, George Gaylord. Life of the Past, An Introduction to Paleontology. Yale University Press, 1953.

Albanese, John. Personal interview, 1971. (Mr. Albanese, professional geologist & amateur archaeologist, practices both disciplines in Wyoming.)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES			
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		OR	
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees		Minutes
NW	41°	54'	05"	106°	06'	47"
NE	41°	54'	05"	106°	00'	00"
SE	41°	52'	20"	106°	00'	00"
SW	41°	52'	20"	106°	06'	47"

See addendum covering 14 Quarries.
Ref.: statement of Significance,
last par. p. 3 and entire p. 4.

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Approximately 7,200 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

NO
11/21/71

S E E I N S T R U C T I O N S

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:

Ned Frost, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Wyoming Recreation Commission

DATE

November 9, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER:

604 East 25th Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Cheyenne

STATE

Wyoming

CODE

56

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name

Paul H. Frost

Title

State Liaison Officer

Date

12-13-71

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Robert H. Utley

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

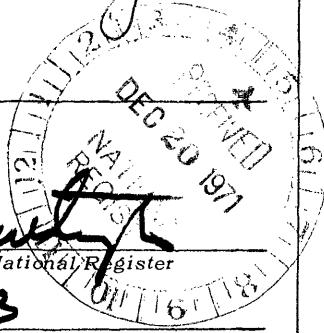
Date 1/18/73

ATTEST:

Wm. M. Muller

Keeper of The National Register

1-9-73



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(Number all entries)

Physical Appearance - 2

discovered to have existed on this planet. Much of that life lived and died within confines presently known as the Como Bluff locality. Today, when ancient strata have been tilted, faulted and thus exposed on the abrupt north face of Como Ridge, two local geological formations (the Sundance and the Morrison) relating to the Mesozoic Era, are laid open to scientific investigation. And here, due to these circumstances, paleontologists of the 19th Century discovered and unearthed, from Morrison formation stratum, many of the most perfect fossil specimens of the largest land dwelling creatures whose existence has yet, to this point of time, been revealed to mankind.

The history of the scientific expeditions which resulted in these fossil findings is a fascinating subject. At the time of their occurrence they captured the interest not only of this nation but of other peoples throughout the world. Thus the historic significance of Como Bluff is world wide.



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Statement of Significance - 2

during the late 1870s and 1880s precipitated a number of expeditions by the Philadelphia Academy of Sciences, Harvard College, the American Museum of Natural History, the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh, the University of Wyoming, the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, and the National Museum of Canada at Ottawa, all in search of comparable specimens for display in their public galleries. Today, there is scarcely a major museum of natural science in the New World---or anywhere else---that does not count at least one dinosaur among its prize exhibits. And there is little dispute about the great public appeal of such displays.

By the 1900s it was fashionable to design museum buildings around the prospect or specific plan that such structures would in due time shelter an assortment of giant saurians of past eras. And it was not long before there was a brisk trade in dinosaur skeletons to many of the smaller museums being founded all over North America and to many of the well-established and famous museums of Europe. Dinosaur skeletons became status symbols and soon every museum had to have its own; today they are still very much in fashion. All of this can be attributed directly to Como Bluff and the great variety, the unbelievable numbers, and the exceptional preservation of dinosaurian skeletons uncovered there. Never before had such spectacular fossil remains been found.

Messrs. Ostrom and McIntosh have---as the title of their work implies---been particularly interested in dinosaurs. That is they have been interested in a past geological era where-in reptilian animals predominated as differentiated from the present geological era where-in mammalian animals predominate. And, of course, so it was with Othniel Marsh and his contemporaries of the 1870's and later decades, it was the dinosaurs of the Mesozoic Era which held their interest and excited their activity. Now, a century later, comes a respected Wyoming geologist, John Albanese, who thinks it important to point out that the Como Bluff fossil quarries also have a connection with these later day and more highly developed forms of animal life, the mammals. In Mr. Albanese's words:

Marsh's legacy is still bearing fruit. A recent examination of his original collection from Como Bluff, stored for decades in the basement of Peabody Museum, revealed the presence of some mammal bones. Next to a locale in Wales, these are the oldest mammal remains yet found on earth. These mammals were tiny creatures, no larger than a small mouse.



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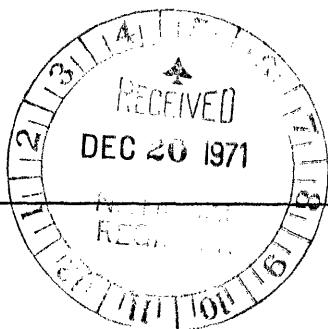
(Number all entries)

Statement of Significance - 3

Yale has sent several expeditions to Como Bluff during the last four years (1968-1971) to search for more of these very rare fossils. It is indeed an irony of evolution that such tiny creatures---scurrying, as they must have, between the feet or even the very toes of the giant dinosaurs---should nevertheless have been the progenitors of a group of animals that would eventually supplant those great beasts; that would eventually (during the present geologic era) become the dominant class of animal life, not the least of whose members is man.

Aside from the educational and scientific values so apparent in the history of the paleontologic activities and studies carried on at Como Bluff, there has also been, and continues to be, an industrial reward stemming from that locale. For, as the indoctrinated reader may already have guessed from the earlier references to "torrid zone climate" and "marshland aspect", these Rocky Mountain-High Plains formations relating to the Mesozoic Era are rich in coal and oil deposits. And Como Bluff, located only forty odd miles distant from the University of Wyoming's fine geology school, has traditionally been one of the field laboratories for students from that campus. Students who, particularly in the fields of petroleum discovery and production, have gone on to rank high among the practicing industrial geologists of the past several generations. Mr. Albanese is, himself, a representative of those students.

As mentioned earlier, Como Bluff is a long, not very high ridge extending on an east-west axis. It is the north, the abrupt, face of this ridge where the various formations are exposed and this is the geologically, and so historically, significant part. This north face of the ridge extends from west to east across sections 18, 17, 16, 9, 10, 11 and 12 of T.22N; R.77W. of the 6th Principal Meridian. Since Marsh's crews made significant discoveries in fourteen different quarries scattered along the entire length of the ridge; and since the ridge itself---as distinguished from its narrow, semi-perpendicular face---widens to cover varying extents of all seven concerned sections as well as portions of other sections; and since other sections have relationships with abandoned railroad grades and station houses and campsites relevant to the historic activity of geologists; and since terrain within still other sections offers points of vantage from which a perspective of the entire historic operation can be gained, it therefore appears appropriate to nominate an historic district shaped as a parallelogram enclosing sections 7 through 18, inclusive, of T.22N., R.77W. of the 6th P.M.



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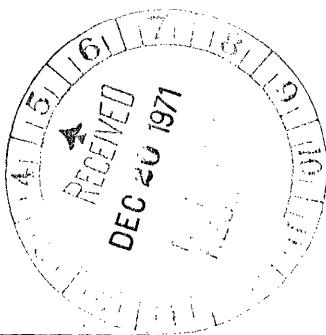
(Number all entries)

Statement of Significance - 4

However, the actual fourteen quarry sites are pinpointed in the map section of these nomination forms. It is these pinpointed sites which should be the true concern of the historic preservationist. There is nothing particularly aesthetic about this historic district and already, since the heyday of its geological historic-significance, the railroad has shifted route from its north to its south side while highways and lessor roads have appeared and vanished and appeared again---and these also on either side of Como Ridge. Old construction fills and cuts, as well as other vistages of industrial developments, may be observed within the boundaries outlined above and there appears to be no reason why new marks of industry would be any more objectionable than the old ones. No such marks---old ones already in place or new ones yet to be made---would harm the significance of this historic district. What needs guarding are the pinpointed quarry sites themselves; the district boundaries only serve to provide cohesiveness for the otherwise separated quarry sites.

That commonly used idiom "one picture is worth a thousand words" is particularly true of this attempt to describe how and where the pinpointed quarry sites fit into the overall terrain features of this, proposed twelve sections, historic district. Therefore, more so than with a usual nomination, it is pertinent at this point to turn to the photograph, map, and geographical data sections of these nomination forms. Messrs. Ostrom and McIntosh, on page 49 in their book, have provided an insert which unfolds to reveal a 33 inch long "Panoramic photograph of Como Bluff taken from the shore of Lake Como just north of Como Station with the major quarries and landmarks located." Within the photograph section of these nomination forms will be found one picture which is itself a photograph of that "Panoramic photograph". But, for a less distorted view of the general terrain and the significant features it is best to turn to page 49 of "Marsh's Dinosaurs."

The quarry sites themselves require the protection, offered through the Historic Preservation Act, against harmful development, exploitation, and vandalism. But it does not appear that possible future scientific investigations, continuing in the old quarry sites or elsewhere, should be barred. They would not detract from the historic heritage this nomination seeks to protect; indeed, they might well add additional values to those historic properties.



Bridger
State
Fed.

OWNERS OF PROPERTY

Albany County:

Sections 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15 of T.22N., R.77W. owned by Messrs. Alfred and Walter Banzhof; Rock River, Wyoming 82083.

Section 14 of T.22N., R.77W. owned by United States Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C.

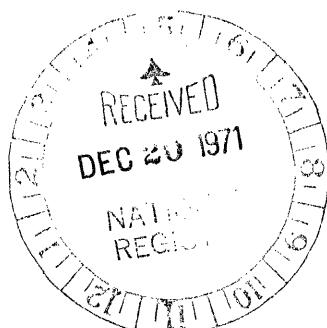
Section 16 of T.22N., R.77W. owned by State of Wyoming (school section).

Carbon County:

Sections 7, 17 of T.22N., R.77W. owned by J. F. Crane, Box 506, Ft. Collins, Colorado 80522.

Section 8 of T.22N., R.77W. owned by: 1.) United States Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C.;
2.) Carlin Ranch, c/o E. W. Harding, 419 W. 4th Ave., Cheyenne, Wyoming 82001.

Section 18 of T.22N., R.77W. owned by: United States Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C.



QUARRY SITES

<u>Name</u>	<u>Latitude</u>	<u>Longitude</u>
Indian Point	41° 53' 30"	106° 00' 02"
Quarry 9	41° 53' 34"	106° 00' 07"
Quarry 10	44° 53' 37"	106° 00' 11"
Quarry 11	41° 53' 33"	106° 00' 15"
Quarry 8	41° 53' 30"	106° 00' 22"
Quarry 3	41° 53' 26"	106° 00' 30"
Quarry 6	41° 53' 27"	106° 00' 41"
Quarry 1	41° 53' 17"	106° 01' 11"
Quarry 2	41° 53' 09"	106° 02' 49"
Quarry 5	41° 53' 12"	106° 03' 03"
Quarry 1a	41° 53' 03"	106° 03' 57"
Copes Quarry	41° 52' 48"	106° 05' 01"
Quarry 7	41° 52' 42"	106° 06' 15"
Quarry 12	41° 52' 54"	106° 06' 33"
Robbers Roost		

