



# Lowell

## A City With Soul!

### LOOK AT LOWELL NOW...

*This has been a theme of many news articles, business conversations, and the awed words out of the mouths of future residents – when even they might just not know it yet! It is our belief that cities with soul don't just happen – it takes community leadership and vision. The National Park Service applauds the City's leadership and business visionaries whose contributions deserve being praised.*

*Now some 28 years old, Lowell National Historical Park was established as a partnership in preservation as well as a celebration of Lowell's heritage. The park has worked with a myriad of partners, none more so than the City of Lowell itself. The "Downtown Preservation District" and nurturing its future are part of a continuing quest for maintaining the community's character while growing in new and progressive ways. There have been constant challenges to the philosophy of protecting the historic core of the City. The vision of preservation and integration of the historic landscape into a 21st century design was considered by some to be beyond reach 30 years ago is now applauded and even expected.*



# A City With Soul!

Perseverance in preservation has turned the corner to become key to Lowell's economic renaissance. Over 400 commercial buildings have been rehabilitated since the founding of Lowell National Historical Park. \$200 million of preservation-based economic development is on track for the 4-year span from 2003 through 2006 and new projects are coming into focus now to continue the progress in the future. A new downtown population grows with residents representing both those from the Lowell area and those finding Lowell as an attractive and affordable alternative.

Lowell National Historical Park would like to take this opportunity to offer a look at what we have been engaged in during 2005, with some brief glimpses into the more distant past to provide context to what has led to these accomplishments. There's a telling statement that you will see echoed regularly throughout... 'The City is the Park and the Park is the City'. Keep this in mind and the clarity of the overlapping connections that the park represents will be more readily focused.

## **The B&M Depot Returns to Prominence**

Driving along Central Street requires strict attention to the road if you're behind the wheel. However, if you take a walk along the same route, the Rialto Building suddenly emerges as a protected gem awaiting its own new life. During the past year, many memories of the former theater and the community atmosphere it hosted were rekindled as the building's exterior restoration progressed. Originally the Boston & Maine Railroad's downtown



depot, and later a theater from 1920 to 1960 – this building, adjacent to the current, burgeoning Jackson/Appleton/Middlesex Streets redevelopment project, offers a future opportunity. A step at a time, the Park has acquired grant funding to restore its storefront façade, replace the roof and parapets, implement structural repairs, restore its two towers and install doors and windows true to its original historic character. Focus has now shifted to finding a reuse for the building that will complement the City's nearby redevelopment efforts and the new parking garage being built just a block away.

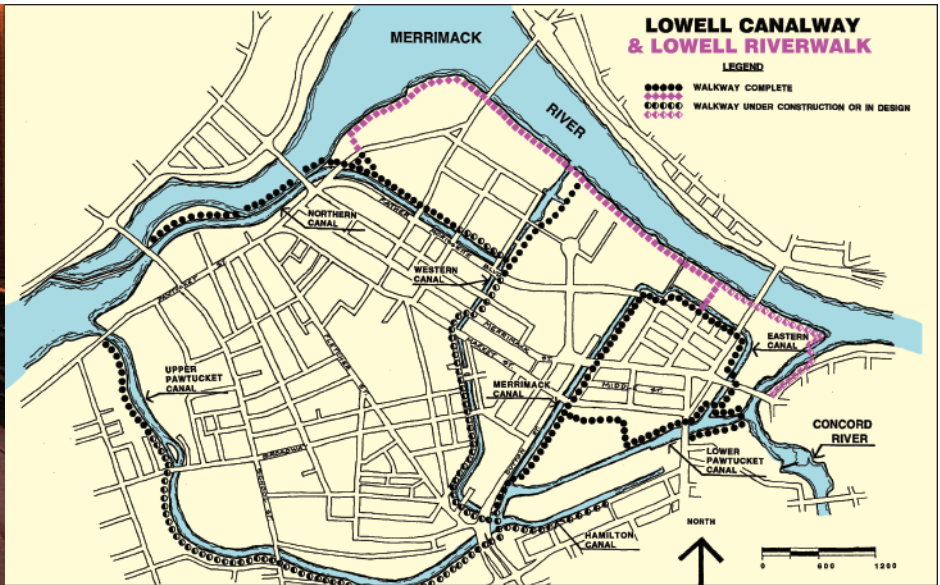
## **Canalway/Riverwalk**

The successful preservation and development of the Canalway and Riverwalk has required a high level of coordination and financial commitment among all levels of government and the private sector and an ongoing dialogue with residents and community groups. The National Park, City

## **Canal/Riverwalk**

*In much the same way that the canals and river provided the framework that shaped the entire development of the city of Lowell in the 19th century, the Canalway and Riverwalk have provided structure to integrate the entire city revitalization effort of the 20th and 21st century. The Canalway and Riverwalk, as public access walkways, have been a tremendous catalyst in promoting historic preservation and economic development in the city.*





of Lowell, The Lowell Plan, the Lowell Historic Board, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) each hold different keys to unlocking the necessary project partnerships. From development, to design, to maintenance and access rights – a complex relationship is in place amid this revitalized city.

The estimated \$42 million project has received funding through federal, state, and local sources, which through Congressman Meehan’s leadership has provided for amenities enhancing the character of downtown for residents and workers alike. Eastern Canal Park along Bridge Street with a focus on native-son Jack Kerouac, the Mack Plaza and Victorian Garden along Shattuck Street, and access to the Riverwalk from Boott Mills at the foot of John Street provide open space and recreational opportunities for all.

Next phases of the project include: design and construction of the Riverwalk between Boott Mills and the Lowell Memorial Auditorium; Canalway development along two sections of the Western Canal; and a walkway from Pawtucket Street to the Pawtucket Gatehouse at the River and Northern Canal Walkway. Each phase of progress is also rooted in partnerships with private and community groups including the Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust, Boott Mills Development, and resident advocacy groups. As important as it is, design phases tend to be invisible elements of projects and deserve acknowledgement. Currently, design plans are underway for the Hamilton Canal Walkway, Western Canal Area 2 and 3, the Upper Pawtucket Canalway, and the Pawtucket Falls Overlook projects.



*The restoration of the Francis Gatehouse complex is dramatic as it recaptures its historic appearance—new windows at the hydraulic gatehouse provide great interior light to a building that had been in the dark for at least fifty years.*

*“The City of Lowell is indeed fortunate to have the National Park as a full partner in our renaissance. Throughout the years, Lowell has directly benefited throughout the Parks direct efforts in preserving and promoting our unique historical treasures. With the National Park’s guidance, Lowell has become a model of how historical preservation does compliment the successful revitalization of a community.”*

*— John Cox, Lowell City Manager*



**Superintendent’s Message**

They say that the creation of a National Park is an expression of faith in the future. It is a pact between generations – a promise from the past to the future. In 1978, Lowell National Historical Park was established to preserve the stories and the historic fabric of a city that was instrumental in the growth and development of our nation. It is a place that you can experience a 19th century laboratory of industrialism and witness today a revitalization based on heritage.

The National Park Service is proud of its accomplishments over the years. It has world class museums, historic properties that have been beautifully restored, one of the best traditional folk festivals in the nation, the nationally recognized Tsongas Industrial History Center that welcomes over 50,000 teachers and students annually, a fleet of canal boats that provide visitors with an opportunity to see Lowell from the waterways, a replica trolley system that connects people to sites around Lowell, and a dedicated staff that are the stewards of this special place.

In my first year in Lowell, I have been made to feel very welcome and have seen the pride that people have for this City. At the same time, I have been challenged to ensure that the good work that preceded me continues and progresses in a way that makes the national park relevant in the 21st century. We feel confident that, with the powerful partnerships we hold, Lowell National Historical Park will stand as a model for community stewardship of our national treasures and unveil the stories that behold Lowell’s past, present and future.

*Michael Creasey*  
Michael Creasey



# A Celebration of Heritage

*“Every community should be so fortunate as to have a National Park in their city. The Park in Lowell has reached out to the local Asian neighborhoods and made us part of their extended family. While the old history of Lowell’s mills is important, the park rangers’ role in building a relationship with those of us who have made Lowell our home in the last few decades should be commended.”*

*– Phone Phetvixay, Mogan Center Community Committee Member*



*Students visiting the Tsongas Industrial History Center find themselves immersed in learning that connects them with the mills, people, and waterways of Lowell.*

## COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS AND CELEBRATIONS

One of the park’s more unique partnerships that is providing great value to the community is the Patrick J. Mogan Cultural Center – a park and University of Massachusetts Lowell collaboration that has engaged the community in sharing their stories, family artifacts and memories. This past year the Mogan Center, through a small grants program, sponsored over 70 programs with more than 66,000 participants engaged in events, exhibits and celebrations related to Black History Month, Dia del Portugal, Irish Cultural Festival, Women’s Week, Greek Independence Day, Puerto Rican Festival, Lao New Year’s Day, Franco American Week, Armenian Commemoration Day, Native American Pow Wow, the Southeast Asian Water Festival and the Jack Kerouac Weekend. The

Mogan Center also sponsors two internships. Doeun (Duey) Kol and Crystal Caron were the 2005 Mogan interns. The Scholar in the City internship for this year is Dr. Khanh T. Dinh, Ph.D from the University of Massachusetts Lowell, Department of Psychology who will undertake a study on socio-cultural factors of Cambodian youth. This year, the existing research from a University of Massachusetts Lowell course offered the opportunity to transform a short-term exhibit revealing the life experiences of immigrants to the City into an exhibit within the Mill Girls and Immigrant Exhibit. This provided updates to the stories of those who had arrived in Lowell and forged their future here... and some whose stories are recounted brought their children to the exhibit opening event to absorb the significance of the road traveled to arrive here.



### Exploring Lowell

Exploring the canals by boat offers a unique perspective on the history of Lowell. While sitting aboard the boat in Guard Locks lock chamber, the sensation of water rising as the boat floats to the river level provides insight into the power of water. The replica trolleys whistle their way along city streets for young and old alike. Unlike many mill workers before them, park visitors decide whether or not to wear earplugs in the operating weave room at the Boott Mills Museum. Each of these experiences is enhanced by the Park Rangers, Trolley Operators, Boat Captains, and Volunteers who operate these conveyances, conduct tours, and welcome visitors throughout the park.



### Inspiring the Next Generation

Excited students pour off buses along French Street, greeted by Museum Teachers and Park Rangers who will guide them during their day-long visit. Approximately 58,000 teachers and students participated in the programs of the Tsongas Industrial History Center in 2005. The Center, a partnership of the University of Massachusetts Lowell and the Park, engages students through hands-on workshops and interactive visits to Park resources: students might build a canal, take on the role of an immigrant, or discover the simple principles and potential complexities of weaving. Students visiting the park find themselves immersed in learning that connects them with the mills, people, and waterways of Lowell. Each thematic program uses the resources of the Park to address grade-level content that teachers must offer annually. Students also have the opportunity to return to the Park during “Kids Take the Lead Day” and share what they have learned in Lowell with parents and friends. Summertime brings both educators and youth to the Center for new explorations. Summer institutes, funded through a U.S. Department of Education



“Teaching American History” grant, offer Lowell 5th and 8th grade educators a chance to immerse themselves in historical content while developing lessons they can use in their classrooms. For a growing number of school-age adventure-seekers, the Center’s “Boott Camp,” National Parks Camp, and “Wonders of Water” camp have become the summer place to spend a week or more exploring Lowell and National Parks of New England.

**Exhibitions Revisited:**

**Boott and Wannalancit Mills**

Visitors are part of the storyline at two new Park exhibitions. Our understanding of Lowell’s history has expanded in the past two decades. The ongoing regeneration of Lowell, the arrival of new residents from around the world, and emerging research offer opportunities to reconsider the Park’s interpretation of industrialization in light of contemporary issues.

The conclusion of the Boott Cotton Mills Museum’s “Lowell: Visions of Industrial



America” exhibition now chronicles how Lowell’s development and the textile industry gradually parted ways in the early 20th century. Deindustrialization can be an academic topic, yet it is one that has a daily impact on our lives. The new exhibition explores the efforts of Lowell residents to reinvent the city, and invites visitors to try their hand at historic preservation and urban redevelopment. It further challenges the public to consider the expansion of cloth and clothing production “beyond New England,” first in the South and more recently in developing nations. Visitors will have a chance to reflect upon their own work experiences in a global context.

Also new in the Park is “The River Transformed” exhibition at the Wannalancit Mill.

The story of how the industrial revolution shaped our complex relationship with nature, a relationship that continues to evolve today, is told here. Visitors discover how 19th-century waterpower – then an engineering marvel – required immense manipulation of the watershed for the power demanded by Lowell’s industry. Discover the impact of urban and industrial development on the Merrimack River watershed and engage in the modern implications of competing uses of this natural resource through an interactive “River Studio.”



*Along the Sidewalk in the Acre* Picture “The Acre”, a storied Lowell immigrant neighborhood, as the scene of discovery by local students from Lowell’s Bartlett Middle School and their teachers, along with the Park and Tsongas Industrial History Center. They set out exploring the history of their environs, interviewing residents and historic experts, researching and writing text, and photo-documenting the area. What they unearthed became the sidewalk and classroom activities of the “Acre History Trail and Activity Guide”. The History Channel’s “Save Our History” program and the University of Massachusetts Lowell’s Publication Department were supporting partners. The History Channel recognized this learning experience’s accomplishment by providing two student participants and their teachers a trip to Washington DC.

*In the 'Coming to Lowell' exhibit in the Mogan Cultural Center, George Chigas and Thida Loeung, with son John, stand next to a life-size picture of their wedding.*





# When You Get the Choice to Sit



A special festival 20th Anniversary exhibit is being planned along with a benefit concert with folk festival favorite, Marcia Ball... "the bayou queen of the piano, steeped in blues and honky-tonk. When revved... she's a rollicking dynamo spewing heat-seeking triplets from the ivories.

**DON'T MISS THIS EVENT – JULY 3RD AT BOARDING HOUSE PARK!**

## CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF THE LOWELL FOLK FESTIVAL

Lowell certainly knows how to throw a party! Each July since 1987, the Lowell Folk Festival brings thousands of visitors to the city for a first class gathering of music, food, culture, and fun! The joint effort that provides for unrivaled enjoyment celebrates 20 years of success in 2006. The Lowell Festival Foundation, the City of Lowell, the National Council for the Traditional Arts, and the Park have been together for all these years in presenting the largest free folk festival in the country. Volunteers and attendees set the dates aside annually (that's the last FULL weekend in July) to assure participation. In 2005, the event provided a great mix of music and activities... from the American Piano Masters, to Korean dance, Mississippi Blues, to Quebecois and Cajun. Experience the best of 20 years of traditional music – mark it down... July 28-30, 2006.



### Boarding House Park Presents...

Lowellians now have the opportunity to spread out a blanket and enjoy a summer evening at Boarding House Park during the Lowell Summer Music Series. Performances as impressive as Eileen Ivers Celtic music to foot-stompin' Cajun with Buckwheat Zydeco – the attendance at the Series has continued to grow! The series, co-sponsored with the Lowell Festival Foundation and University of Massachusetts Lowell, has added zest to the city's social calendar. Check out the 2006 schedule by going to [www.lowellsummermusic.org](http://www.lowellsummermusic.org).

### Evolving Into a Visionary Village

From the Park Visitor Center along Market Street to Shattuck Street to Lucy Larcom Park there are agents of change at work along this "evolving" thoroughfare. A new vision led by the Revolving Museum for the Art and Cultural District combines lighting to highlight the City's architecture and public art; gardens (the Flowering City); connections to artisans, festivals, and public spaces; connections to water (the canals) as a

*"For years, Lowell National Historical Park has worked tirelessly to preserve the rich cultural and history of the City of Lowell," said Meehan. "This past year was no different as the Park Service once again demonstrated their ability to bring the story of Lowell's past to life for current and future generations through their museums, public memorials, and events, like the widely popular Lowell Folk Festival."*

*– Congressman Marty Meehan*



# or Dance, We Hope You Dance!

source for inspiration; connections to engaging places such as the National Park Visitor Center, Brush Art Gallery, Revolving Museum, Quilt Museum, National Streetcar Museum, the Moody Street Feeder Gatehouse; and connections to youth through public artworks. Art works and programs emerge within Visionary Village and will continue to expand in 2006 as an active center of art, history, entertainment, and enterprise continue to EVOLVE!

**COOL Making a "World" of Difference**

On the first Thursday of each month people are invited to take a trip around the world – Destination World is sponsored by the Cultural Organization of Lowell (COOL). From Mexico to Cameroon, this monthly event starts off at the National Park Visitor Center and spreads across the City with feature movies, art, dance, music, creative workshops, special dining experiences, and family fun. The National Park looks forward to continued success and an expanded partnership with COOL.

**Spindle City Corps, A Community Team**

The yellow-t-shirted Spindle City Corps crews came together again during the summer, and their work efforts benefited the park and all visitors. Representing a diverse spectrum of Lowell's high school student population, the Corps combines student summer employment with educational and career development opportunities representing a wonderful



community effort. The student participants are challenged toward building their understanding and sense of stewardship and community. In partnership with Community Teamwork, Inc. (CTI) the Park has seen the completion of maintenance projects in public areas, especially the canalways. Unchecked vegetation growth, which could adversely impact the integrity of these historic canal structures, doesn't stand a chance with the Corps crews pouring their energies into these improvements. Park maintenance staff and park rangers organize the projects and integrate learning components in collaboration with CTI. This ongoing program is supported through funding from the federal Public Land Corps and Youth Conservation Corps programs along with community and business sponsors.

*"Middlesex Community College's collaboration with Lowell National Historical Park has resulted in numerous projects that have met a wide variety of community needs and impacted many diverse populations."*

*– Carole Cowan,  
Middlesex Community College President*



## LOWELL 2006 MUSIC SERIES

June	August
6/30 Hot Tuna	8/4 Leon Russell
7/1 Eric Burdon and the Animals	8/5 Grace Potter and the Nocturnals
7/3 Marcia Ball, fundraiser for the 20th Lowell Folk Festival	8/11 Shakespeare "A Midsummer Nights Dream"
7/7 Chicago Blues Reunion	8/12 La Bottine Souriante
7/8 Judy Collins	8/18 Dar Williams
7/14 The SRO players	8/19 Leahy
7/15 Orleans	8/25 Mighty Sam McClain
7/20 Indigo Girls	8/26 Bruce Hornsby
7/21 Eddie from Ohio	8/31 Dr. John
7/22 Davy Jones of the Monkees	
	9/1 Los Lobos
	9/2 Spanish Harlem Orchestra
	9/8 the Ben Taylor band
	9/9 27th Banjo & Fiddle Contests

Tickets and more information at [www.lowellsummermusic.org](http://www.lowellsummermusic.org)



**Every River Should Have These Ambassadors:** During the summer you might have seen them at the Southeast Asian Water Festival, the Lowell Folk Festival, or other events. They are the River Ambassadors, Lowell High School students for whom the emphasis is on gaining exposure to and understanding of environmental issues and career opportunities. Of those in the River



Ambassador Program (RAP), four students: Cara Choup, Jany Chourb, Marven Horm, and Sophall Tom, came aboard for the summer as Park Rangers, learning the history of the city – its national and global significance – sharing it with visitors at numerous sites. During the last two years, the Park has expanded its connections with RAP along with the UMass Lowell Center for Family, Work, and Community. As a conservation and preservation agency, the tie to the National Park Service is a natural fit. As the school year started up again, these RAP student leaders continued to envision and implement community connections with Park operations. In the coming year, their involvement is eagerly anticipated. RAP will be engaged with RiverFest on June 10, 2006 acknowledging the challenges faced by and celebrating the protection of the Concord and Merrimack River watersheds.



**MCC Committed to Citizenship and Learning**

*The National Park is turned into a learning laboratory for students and faculty at Middlesex Community College. The “Lowell Civic Collaborative” was developed through a grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service that builds on the College’s commitments to the responsibilities of citizenship and service learning. Students are engaged in conversations about Lowell and explorations of the national park, the waterways and City life. Students have made presentations on topics ranging from issues relating to people with disabilities to labor issues that reflected the Mill Girl’s experience in the 19th century.*

**VOLUNTEERS**

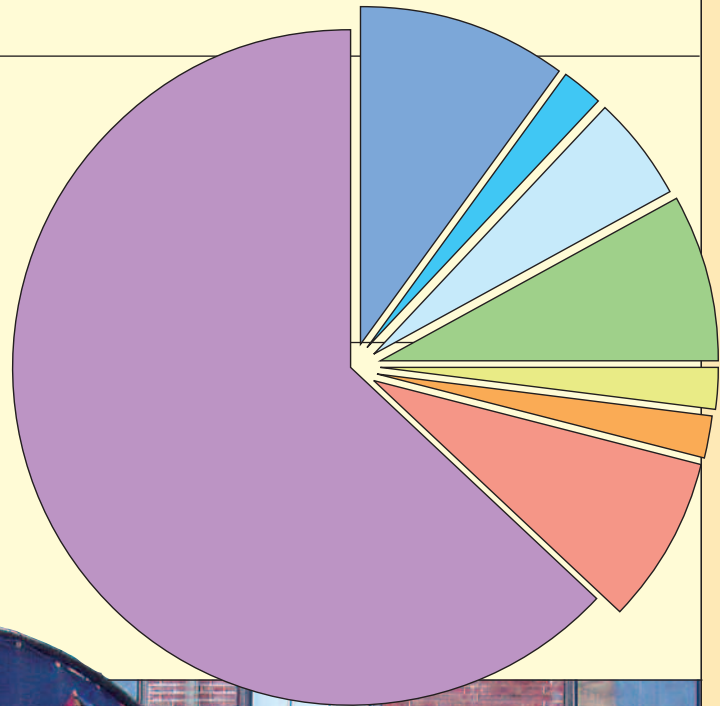
Lowell National Historical Park is grateful for the immense contribution made by the corps of volunteers that assists in myriad functions throughout the park. These volunteers have signed up as part of the National Park Service’s Volunteer-in-Parks program. In 2005, a tremendous accumulation of 76,388 hours were donated by over two thousand volunteers.





# Lowell Visitation

EXHIBITS & EVENTS	VISITORS
Visitor Center	74,884
Public Tours and Outreach	16,368
Mogan Center	35,672
Boott Cotton Mills Museum	59,903
Suffolk Mill Waterpower Exhibit	10,615
Canal Sites	8,754
Tsongas Industrial History Center	56,210
Special Events	446,776
<b>TOTAL VISITORS</b>	<b>709,182</b>
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM OFFERINGS</b>	<b>4,036</b>







### Special Thanks and Best Wishes ...

Transitions are a constant, though the ebb and flow varies with the times. Recent departures among those committed to Lowell's culture, community, and historical preservation include:

- » Cynthia Kryston, retired as Deputy Superintendent of Lowell National Historical Park with over 42 years in the National Park Service.
- » Michael Smith, moving on from the American Textile History Museum to become Director of the Nebraska State Historical Society.
- » And on the horizon...Peter O'Connell is planning to retire as Director of the Tsongas Industrial History Center. The Center's evolution and excellent reputation during the last ten years are clearly signs of Peter's commitment – and a lasting legacy of his accomplishments.



### Katrina Caring

Sometimes our concern for community extends beyond the physical neighborhood, City, and even the region. When Hurricane Katrina hit America's Gulf Coast, four employees of Lowell National Historical Park were among the thousands who responded to the recovery

effort. Based on their existing expertise these individuals answered the emergency call for assistance: Marcia Dolce, Contract Specialist, brought her expertise to Louisiana, Donna Richardson, Chief of Interpretation and an Emergency Medical Technician, provided support at a shelter for refugees in Texas; Marc Mousseau, Carpenter, offered his abilities and a park vehicle in New Orleans, and Charlie Raye, Electrician, assisted in Mississippi. Their contributions, and those of over 1,500 National Park Service employees nation-wide, were recognized and honored by the Secretary of the US Department of the Interior.

### Looking for a Great Read or Local Gift?

Whether your tastes run to local history or Beat poets, the bookstores at the Park Visitor Center and the Boott Cotton Mills Museum offer a unique selection of books and other items that expound on the city's history, textiles, labor organizations, and the National Park Service. You can find Boott toweling, produced on looms in the museum, as well as other matchless goods.

### Painting Credit:

Front Cover, "Lowell from Above" by Vassilios (Bill) Giavis

### Photography Credits:

James Higgins: Riverwalk–page 2; Tsongas Industrial History Center, tour boat, and trolley–page 4; Marcia Ball, Boarding House Park, "Homage to Women"– pages 6-7;

Kevin Harkins: Palmer Street–page 3, Nora Jean Brousseau–page 6; Park Staff–page 10

Anna Isaak-Ross: Destination World Dancer–page 8

