

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED AUG 27 1976  
DATE ENTERED DEC 1 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

NEW PROVIDENCE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ACADEMY, AND CEMETERY

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Stony Point

VICINITY OF Surgoinville

First

STATE

Tennessee

CODE

47

COUNTY

Hawkins

CODE

073

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

New Providence Presbyterian Church of Stony Point, Surgoinville, Tennessee, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER

Stony Point

CITY, TOWN

Surgoinville

VICINITY OF

STATE

Tennessee

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Registrar of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Hawkins County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Rogersville

STATE

Tennessee

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE <u>c. 1800</u>

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The New Providence Presbyterian Church, Academy and Cemetery are integral parts of the remaining evidence of the first Hawkins County, Tennessee, settlement in Carters Valley, one of the first two in the State. Already on the National Register of Historic Places, representing this settlement, are Long Meadow (the William Young house, one section of which may date from as early as 1770); Stony Point (the great house built by William Armstrong, Third, 1789-90), and the Captain Thomas Amis house-fort 1780-81). All three are closely connected with New Providence Presbyterian Church, Academy and Cemetery. This nomination will bring to the Register all other known existing structures associated with the Carters Valley settlement period.

The original log church building of the New Providence Presbyterian Church stood in Carters Valley on the east bank of Renfro Creek, just south of the present Amis Chapel Methodist Church and about 70 feet north of the present Carters Valley road. This log church was built around 1785, according to tradition,<sup>1</sup> on land entered by Arthur Galbraith (271 acres "in Carters Valley north side Holston," North Carolina Land Grants in Tennessee, 1778-1791, No. 2599, registered in 1788). This land later passed from Arthur Galbraith to his son-in-law, William Armstrong, Third, who married Elizabeth Galbraith. The original New Providence Cemetery was on the west bank of Renfro Creek, but south of the Carters Valley road on the same land grant which passed to James Amis who married Mary, daughter of William Armstrong, Third. A few rocks marking unknown graves are still visible at this site. The graveyard is almost in the front yard of the H. B. Amis house. It was originally a fairly large cemetery. William Armstrong, Second, and his two wives are known to be buried here. Other members of the older generation of settlers are also probably buried here.

Again according to tradition, the site of the New Providence Presbyterian Church was moved after 1800 from Carters Valley to the top of the ridge just northeast of William Armstrong, Third's mill at Stony Point--the great house he built. On August 26, 1816, William Armstrong, Second, deeded to the Trustees of the New Providence Meeting House "a certain lot on the northeast side of Armstrong's mill, including New Providence Meeting House and ground sufficient for a burying ground, also including the school house," (Hawkins County Deed Book 18, p. 627).<sup>2</sup> According to notes written about 1870 by Robert Armstrong of Surgoinsville on a copy of an older record of the Church, the first building on the new site was a log church used also as the school. The second building was a small brick church. The third was a large frame building which stood about 30 years. It was torn down in 1866, and a second frame building was erected shortly thereafter. This building burned in March, 1892, and was replaced by the building now standing, completed in late 1893.

1. Certainly a church building existed at New Providence by 1786 since the Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America records that on May 29, 1786, the General Assembly directed that the synod "meet the fourth Wednesday of October at the New Providence Church" and that Mr. Zanckey open the synod with a sermon. The Minutes of the Presbytery of Holston, Vol. 3, p. 288 (in Montreat Collection) show that the Presbytery met at New Providence on Oct. 22-25, 1782. However the word Church, implying a building, is not used in the minute.

2. Mr. Robert Armstrong of Surgoinsville recorded that this "lot" amounted to 10 acres.

DESCRIPTION

Evidence indicates that the early church houses were also used as schools. The earliest extant record concerning a separate school building for the New Providence congregation is dated 1852. In May, 1852, the Building Committee contracted with Daniel Fields of Hawkins County for the erection of a brick building for the New Providence Academy for the sum of \$625.00. The academy building, according to the extant contracts, is described as "30 ft. by 40 ft. with one partition (partition) 30 ft. The walls to be painted inside and out. The storey (sic) to be 17 ft. high--also the house to have two chimneys with 4 fireplaces--also two extra chimneys for dwelling house to be completed by the 1st day of December 1852," signed by D. T. Fields. At this time William Armstrong deeded still further land to the Trustees of the New Providence Academy, presumably for the location of the new academy building and the dwelling for the pastor-teacher. The arrangement, from the beginning, seems to have been that the pastor of the Church also taught a school. When enrollment increased, the pastor hired an assistant. It is interesting to note that the minutes of the Academy Trustees include the choice of some of the textbooks to be used. These are not the usual blueback spellers and McGuffey readers, but advanced and progressive texts of the period. The Academy building erected in 1852 burned and was replaced by the present two-story academy in 1901. The present brick building has two teaching rooms, one over the other with a front porch, the stairs going up on the porch. One back corner of the first floor is enclosed as a small office with a door opening on the side of the building. One flue serves the entire building. This building is a rectangle approximately 30' x 40'. There are four windows per side for each room, except where the office door to the outside replaces one window. The teacher's desk in each room is on a raised platform. Blackboards cover the walls behind the teachers' desks. The County continued to use this building as a public school until 1942. It has been standing empty since 1942.

In the earliest records, this school is referred to as New Providence Academy. In 1877, the Board of Trustees incorporated the school as New Providence High School. However, shortly afterward it is referred to as Maxwell Academy. Minutes of the Trustees for this name-change no longer exist. The present building bears a sign "Maxwell Academy." The "Maxwell" refers to George Maxwell, an early settler (N. C. Land Grant #1213, 1784), a member of the New Providence Congregation, and a man particularly interested in education.

The present church building consisted first of a sanctuary, vestibule, and one room. Sunday school rooms were added on the east side during World War II. This building faces the cemetery, separated from it by a circular drive. Previous buildings stood to the northeast within the edge of what is now the cemetery. Cruciform in plan, the present building is of vernacular Gothic design with three roof gables remaining. On the east and west sides in the approximate center are two bays with 5 windows each, extending outward to align with the projection of the bell tower at the front. The base of the bell tower forms a room and vestibule with one porch at the northeast corner. A small bay with two windows at the rear forms the pulpit. Small dentils decorate the arch of the porch to the vestibule. The tower itself is in three sections, four sides each, the symmetry of which is marred by the foreshortening of the spire. The windows have rounded arches of brick; and white shutters, repeating the arch, fold outward. The entrance door repeats the rounded arch of the windows. The two lower sections of the bell tower beneath the spire have pointed arches on the latticed ventilators. The tower is weatherboarded. The sanctuary sits on a native limestone block foundation. The peaks of the roof, set above the round-arched windows, which are reinforced by the repetition of the rounded arch in the porch and entrance door, establish a simple Gothic mood which, in terms of the setting, is most pleasing to the eye. The Church sits on top of the ridge with a long drive up to it, bordered by large boxwoods, in the midst of a grove which covers the entire hill, and faces

DESCRIPTION

the serenity of the cemetery which flows among a grove of very old cedars. The setting gives the whole a unity, dignity and peace of exceptional quality.

The interior of the Church is remarkable both for its woodwork and for the balance and simplicity of the cruciform treatment. The flooring of oak is lighter than the stained pine used in the pews, wainscoting, ceiling molding, and ceiling. The wainscoting is made of vertical joined and grooved strips between the dust board and chair rail. The walls are plastered and painted between the chair rail and the ceiling molding. The latter is unique, composed of horizontal grooved strips joined, which project from the wall about four inches somewhat in the manner of sunk fillet. The ceiling is also made of joined and grooved strips. The pulpit fixtures are of the same stained pine and repeat the grooved motif. In the center of the wall of the pulpit bay hangs a crucifix made from the bedboard of a Tipton family bed. It matches the strip and groove decoration of the woodwork and would appear to be made from a left-over piece of window framing. Since the Tiptons furnished the lumber for the Church's woodwork, it is probable that a left-over piece of trim was used in the bed. In the center of the rear wall of the sanctuary are double doors, round arched, leading to the room under the tower. The large central lighting fixture, now electrified, is original to the building. No evidence exists now of how the sanctuary was heated before the furnace was built in the Sunday-School addition.

The complete minutes of the Church Building Committee of 1892-94 are still extant. The Committee contracted first with Charles Lackie (or Lackey) of Rogersville as the brickmason. Lackie moved into the church manse and placed his kiln in the yard. The kiln set the manse on fire and both burned to the ground. Lackie thought his brick damaged beyond use and left the job. The Committee then contracted with Frank Allison of Rogersville, who built several buildings still standing there, as brickmason. He was able to salvage many of Lackie's brick and proceeded with the building. A local carpenter named Wilson was given the carpentry contract.

The total cost of the original sanctuary completed in 1893 was \$2,988.50. Individual expenditures were:

\$107.72 to Charles Lackey (Lackie) for work performed  
 \$1,467.49 to Allison for brickwork  
 \$650.35 to Wilson for carpentry work  
 \$20.32 for hardware  
 \$178.68 for roofing tin  
 \$175.83 for sash, doors and blinds  
 \$246.07 for lumber  
 \$40.00 for supplies  
 \$5.00 for architect  
 \$7.54 for freight  
 \$7.50 for nails and paint  
 \$79.50 for hauling

There is no indication of who or what the "architect" was. It is said, however, that this building was modeled on the New Providence Presbyterian Church at Maryville, Tennessee. It is possible, therefore, that the \$5.00 for "architect" was the cost of purchasing the plans of the Maryville church.

Frank Allison was later in 1901 the contractor for the Academy building which is still standing. This building merely reproduces the center section of the older (1876) St. Clair Academy in south Hawkins County. The St. Clair Academy no longer stands.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 4

The New Providence Presbyterian Church Manse is located on high ground approximately 600 feet west-northwest of the academy building. This single story, weatherboarded frame building was erected ca. 1910 as a residence for the pastor. It stands on a brick foundation and the hip and gable roof retains its original metal shingles and brick chimney stacks; gabled sections project from the south, west, and north elevations, and this creates a roughly cruciform floor plan. The L-shaped, shed roofed porch which has turned porch posts with vestigial Victorian trim, was enclosed on its east end and to this has been attached a shed addition. A modern concrete block carport was built against the north wall. Northeast of the house are three outbuildings: a gable-roofed, frame shed, a similar, but smaller, building, with a shed roof, and a concrete block well shelter, which also has a shed roof.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1780 to present

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Various. See Description.

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The New Providence Presbyterian Church, with its academy and cemetery, is significant to national history as one of the oldest continuous congregations west of the Alleghenies and one of the three oldest in Tennessee. As a continuous congregation, including the generations of many of the same families who constituted the original membership, it is significant locally. As probably the first, at most second, school in Hawkins County and one of the first schools in Tennessee, the church academy is equally significant. And the fact that at the present time this religious enclave, including a church, cemetery, academy building, and manse, is still intact and, except for the academy, still operating after nearly 200 years is most significant of all. The Church, Academy, and Cemetery are the only remaining elements of the early Carters Valley settlement not now on the Register.

In 1773-74 Samuel Doak organized the Hopewell Church three miles west of the present Blountville, Tenn., on the main road to Long Island on the Holston. This church was also known as Taylor's and the Rev. Jacob Lake is credited with being the first Presbyterian minister. In 1776 Doak organized a second Presbyterian Church, Concord, on the Holston near Vance's, also known as Upper Concord. Both these churches were members of the Presbytery of Hanover. Neither congregation exists today.

In 1779, the Records of the Presbyterian Church record a plea to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church from the Hanover Presbytery for missionaries in Virginia and on the frontier. According to Presbyterian Church records in the Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches Library, Montreat, N. C., in 1780 Doak and the Rev. Charles Cummings founded four congregations: Salem, near Jonesboro; Mount Bethel near Greeneville; Carter's Valley at the upper end near Church Hill; and New Providence<sup>1</sup> on Renfro Creek in lower Carters Valley. Salem, Mount Bethel, and

1. The Minutes of the Presbytery of Holston, Vol. 3 p. 2 (in Montreat Collection) records under "Roll of Churches:"

New Providence, Hawkins Co., Stony Point

1780

The same Minutes record on p. 272 that during the meeting of the Presbytery at Concord Church on Oct. 23, 1781, a call was presented to Rev. Montgomery from Bethel in Washington County which Mr. Montgomery "took into consideration a few days and that another call was presented from Concord and Providence to the same with the same effect." In the Minutes New Providence is most often referred to as "Providence."

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See attached sheet

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 9 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A 

1	7	3	3	6	7	1	0	4	0	4	0	1	4	0
ZONE		EASTING				NORTHING								

B 

ZONE		EASTING				NORTHING							

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Boundary includes all land owned by New Providence Presbyterian Church, Stony Point, Surgoinsville, Tenn., Inc., off east side of road from Stony Point to Carters Valley, including church building, cemetery and woodland - approximately 6 acres; and such land under the same ownership on the west side of the same road, including the academy building (but not the church manse), approximately 3 acres.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

*Blanche Grigsby*

ORGANIZATION

Blanche Grigsby, County Historian, Hawkins County, TN

DATE

March 8, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

Huffmaster Street

TELEPHONE

615-272-8009

CITY OR TOWN

Rogersville

STATE

Tennessee

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Herbert L. Hays*

TITLE

Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

DATE

8/23/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Winters*

DATE

12-1-78

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST

*Bill Lebovich*

DATE

Nov 30, 1978

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

## SIGNIFICANCE

New Providence have continued to exist to this day. The order of founding is not now known. Pertinent records, if they ever existed, have not been found. But it is obvious that the New Providence Church is one of the three oldest congregations of the Presbyterian Church continuously in existence in Tennessee. Since the Presbyterian congregations preceded all others in Tennessee, New Providence is one of the three oldest churches in the State. The Presbyterian Church did not come upon the Cumberland until after 1780.

It is unfortunate that no records of New Providence as a congregation exist before the 1790's. It is recorded that in 1796 the congregation consisted of 50 families. It is also recorded that the name derives from the church to which William Armstrong II had belonged in Augusta County, Va., but it is very likely that others besides Armstrong who were among the organizers of New Providence also came from this same Virginia Church. The Rev. Charles Cummings had been a pastor in Augusta County.

A list of original families who were members before 1800 contains these old Hawkins County names: Maxwell, McPheeters, Erwin (Irwin), Phipps, Curry, Kinhead (Kincaid), Long, Marshall, Cooper, Taylor, Brown, Lyons, Leeper, Ingram, McMinn, Watterson, Galbraith, Armstrong, Caldwell, and Forgey. Descendants of these families remain in the county, and the church's present membership contains a great many of these same names. Thus New Providence has been a continuous religious center for these families for almost 200 years. Furthermore, these families have furnished leaders in government, politics, medicine, education, and agriculture to the County and the State for 200 years.

From the time of its first log structure, New Providence provided, besides religious service to the community, education of the young in compliance with the tenets of the Presbyterian Church. Until after 1852, evidently the church building and the pastor served the school. After the completion of the first academy building, the pastor served as principal and employed assistants.

During at least the first 40 years of its existence, New Providence was the seat of the pastor who also served the Rogersville Church. Thus, the Rogersville Church was a charge subordinate to New Providence. Furthermore, in the controversy which divided the Presbyterian Church, including Rogersville, and brought the Cumberland Presbyterian Church into existence, New Providence remained steadfast to the old tenets.

As the frontier filled up and new presbyteries were organized, New Providence, established in the Hanover Presbytery, belonged to Abingdon (1785), Union (1799), and Holston to which it has belonged since 1826. When New Providence was organized, it was in Sullivan County, N. C. Since then it has been in Spencer County, State of Franklin, Hawkins County, Territory South of the River Ohio, State of Tennessee, and the Confederate States.

As a school, New Providence preceded McMinn Academy (1806) in Rogersville and all other Hawkins County academies. George Maxwell, William Armstrong, and Andrew Galbraith, who were among the organizers of New Providence, were also on the first Board of Trustees for McMinn Academy. The building of a separate academy building in 1852 followed the general academy movement in the U. S. which began in the 1840's. Except for the occasional 3-month "old field schools," the New Providence school may very well have been the only continuous school in Hawkins County before the organization of McMinn in Rogersville.

Research on the history of New Providence Presbyterian Church was done by Mrs. Ruth Amis Crowe, Church Hill, Tennessee, and the church papers and Armstrong family papers were made available by Miss Jane Armstrong, Stony Point, Surgoinsville, Tennessee.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Armstrong Family Papers in the possession of Miss Jane Armstrong, Stony Point, Surgoinsville, Tennessee.

Crowe, Ruth Amis. "The Beginnings of Presbyterianism in East Tennessee and the Early History of the Churches of New Providence and Rogersville in Hawkins County." (Paper prepared for course-work, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, 1955).

Goodspeed's History of Tennessee Containing Historical and Biographical Sketches of Thirty East Tennessee Counties. . . . Reprinted from Goodspeed's History of Tennessee 1887. Nashville, Elder, 1972.

Hawkins County Deed Books, Registrar's Office, Courthouse, Rogersville, Tennessee.

Manuscripts in the Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches Library, Montreat, N. C.

Minutes of the Holston Presbytery (in Montreat Collection).

North Carolina Land Grants in Tennessee 1778-1791. Compiled by Betty Goff Cook Cartwright and Lillian Johnson Gardiner, Memphis, Tenn., 1958.

Papers and Records of New Providence Presbyterian Church, Stony Point, Surgoinsville, Tennessee. These include Record Book and Register of New Providence Presbyterian Church (n.d.), Register and Minutes of Session, Minutes of New Providence Academy Building Committee (1852-), Minutes of New Providence Academy Trustees, and Minutes and Records of New Providence Presbyterian Church Building Committee (1892-).

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DEC 1 1978

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10

PAGE 2

Acreage of nominated property: approximately 18

Map: Stoney Point, Tenn.

Scale: 1:24000

Verbal boundary Description:

The property nominated is a quadrilateral tract which measures approximately 750' x 1400' x 450' x 1150' and includes the church, academy, cemetery, and manse, and is bounded as follows: beginning at point A; thence southwesterly approximately 750 feet to point B; thence northwesterly approximately 1400 feet to point C; thence northeasterly approximately 450 feet to point D; thence southeasterly approximately 1150 feet to the beginning.

UTM:

- A. 17/336820/4040230
- B. 17/336760/4040020
- C. 17/336440/4040310
- D. 17/336520/4040420