

SM-385, Fowler Store
St. Mary's County
Capsule Summary

circa 1870; 1888

The Fowler Store is a well-preserved historic site in the village of Mechanicsville. This two-part structure, consisting of the western three-bay dwelling, and the eastern five-bay store building, retains most of its original exterior fabric. Its substantial size and prominent corner location defines the intersection of Old Route 5 and the Chaptico-Mechanicsville Road.

The Fowler Store, which continued to operate until 1943, is the oldest commercial structure still standing in the village. The earliest mention of a store located on this property was in 1873 when George T. Burroughs devised his "store house and lot" to Richard T. Copsey. In 1888, J. Woodley Latham erected the eastern five-bay addition on the property. The store has been under Fowler family ownership since 1889.

SM-385, John A. Fowler Store
St. Mary's County
Maryland Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan Data

Historic Context

Geographic Organization: Western Shore

Chronological/Developmental Period: Agricultural-Industrial Transition, 1815-1870
Industrial/Urban Dominance, 1870-1930

Historic Period Theme: Architecture
Economic

Resource Type

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Village

Historic Function and Use: Store
Private Residence

Known Design Source: Unknown

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. SM-385

Magi No.

DOE yes no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic George T. Burroughs Store

and/or common John A. Fowler Store (pref.)

2. Location

street & number Old Route 5 not for publication

city, town Mechanicsville vicinity of congressional district 5

state MD county St. Mary's

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Fowler Enterprises Inc.

street & number 3505 Harrisburg Court telephone no.: 301-884-3390

city, town Mechanicsville state and zip code MD 20659

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Clerk of Court liber DBK 264

street & number St. Mary's County Courthouse folio 43

city, town Leonardtown state MD

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. SM-385

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Fowler Store is located on the north side of Old Route 5 in Mechanicsville at the intersection of Old Route 5 and the Mechanicsville-Chaptico Road. The Store faces south, with the principal gable oriented on an east/west axis.

The Fowler Store is a substantial complex consisting of a western two-and-a-half story, three-bay dwelling and an eastern two-and-a-half story, five bay Store. According to the current owner, the smaller western section predates the larger and adjoining eastern section. A partial basement exists under the dwelling which rests on ironstone piers. Here, hewn beams and round logs support the house. Cut nails are visible in the basement's exposed framing. A fireplace was once located in this basement. The Store has no basement and is supported by both hewn and sawn beams which rest on ironstone piers and wood blocks. Both roofs are covered with pressed tin shingles.

The south (main) facade of the store is sheathed in German siding and has a roofline broken by two gables. Across the full front of this five bay facade is a one-story screened porch with a tin roof. This porch, supported by square posts and with a square post baluster, replaced an earlier turned post porch. The two western bays of this facade consist of a pair of six-over-one sash windows with narrow surrounds and a four-light-over-two-panel door with a two-light transom window and sidelights. The eastern three bays consist of an identical entrance door and two six-over-one sash windows with narrow surrounds. An historic photo shows that this elevation originally consisted of two Victorian shop windows and a central double door entrance. The second floor is lit by five two-over-two sash windows with narrow surrounds. Each gable is lit at the attic story by a small Palladian window. To the west of the Store stands a two-and-a-half story, three bay dwelling house which is stepped back from the line of the Store. Like the Store, this dwelling is sheathed in German siding and has a tin roof. It has a front porch across the first floor which wraps around the western side of the house. This porch is supported by square posts with decorative sawn brackets and has an asphalt shingle roof. The first floor is lit by three two-over-two sash windows with wide surrounds. The entrance door is a nine-light-over-two panel door with a three light transom and sidelights. The second floor is lit by three two-over-two sash windows with narrow surrounds. The central gable at the roofline is lit by a small Palladian window like those which light the attic story of the Store. The roof is pierced at both the east and west ends by an interior brick chimney.

The western elevation of the Store is blind on the first floor and lit on the second floor by one two-over-two sash window. The western gable end of the dwelling house is lit on the first floor by three two-over-two sash windows with wide surrounds and on the second floor by two two-over-two sash windows and one six-over-six sash window with narrow surrounds. The attic is lit by a small Palladian window.

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7.1 Description

Contributing Resource Count: 1

The north elevation of the house consists of a modern two-story addition constructed around the turn of the century. This wing is covered in a variety of sidings including weatherboard, German, and aluminum siding. The first floor is pierced by two doors, one two-over-two sash window and one small one-over-one sash window. The second floor is lit by two six-over-six sash windows with narrow surrounds. The north elevation of the Store consists of a two-bay, gable end section sheathed in asbestos shingles. It is pierced on the first floor by two two-over-two sash windows and a four-light-over-three-panel door. The second floor of these western-most bays is lit by two six-over-six sash windows with narrow surrounds. The attic story is lit by one six-over-six sash window. The eastern end of the Store consists of a four-light-over-three-panel entrance door and a one-story, two-bay, gable roofed addition pierced by six-over-six sash windows and entrance doors. This addition once served the store as a warehouse. The second floor of the Store's east end is lit by two two-over-two sash windows and one small six-over-one sash window.

The east elevation of the Fowler Store is lit on the first floor by three two-over-two sash windows. Here, there is also a four-light-over-three panel door with a shed roof portico covered in tin shingles. The second floor is lit by two two-over-two sash windows and the attic story is lit by a small Palladian window.

The interior of both the dwelling and the Store has been divided into apartments. Only the interior of the dwelling was seen. The dwelling was constructed with a center hall plan which was reworked around 1946. An open stringer stair with scroll decoration, turned balusters, a turned newell post, and a molded hand rail survives. There are also some four panel doors located throughout the house.

One gable roofed outbuilding sheathed in weatherboard siding underneath asphalt shingles stands on the property. This structure is supported by cinderblocks and was moved here by the current owner. The current owner remembers that a chicken house, an outhouse, and a barn once stood on the property.

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8.1 Significance

owner. Further information regarding the Fowler family and store is contained in the transcribed tapes of a 1989 interview with Henry Fowler, Jr., Maddox Burroughs, and Johnny Wood. The transcription of this interview, conducted by Julie King, Regional Archaeologist for Southern Maryland, and Elaine Eff, of the Maryland DHCP, is available at the Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum and at the Maryland DHCP in Crownsville.

SM-385, John A. Fowler Store
St. Mary's County
8.2 Significance

Chain of Title

TO: Fowler Enterprises, Inc.

FROM: Henry J. Fowler

RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber DBK 264, folio 43.

DATE: December 22, 1976.

NOTES: Transfer of two parcels. 1.) containing between one and two acres of land located on the state road near its intersection with the public road to All Faith Church. 2.) land known as "Blacksmith Shop."

TO: Henry J. Fowler and Susan F. Fowler, his wife.

FROM: John A. Fowler and Josephine P. Fowler, his wife.

RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber CBG 22, folio 487.

DATE: February 28, 1949.

NOTES: Transfer of all that tract of land located on the state road near its intersection with the public road to All Faith Church and containing between one and two acres of land.

TO: John A. Fowler

FROM: Joseph H. Ching, Trustee

RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber JMM 1, folio 193.

DATE: September 12, 1922.

NOTES: Sale of property is the result of a Circuit court judgement.

TO: Joseph H. Ching, Trustee

FROM: Thomas H. Fowler

RECORD: St. Mary's County Equity Case

DATE: 1922

NOTES: Thomas H. Fowler died intestate. Consequently, his estate was settled in the Circuit Court of Maryland. Joseph H. Ching was appointed as Trustee on May 1, 1922.

TO: Thomas H. Fowler

FROM: J. Woodley Latham and Susan E. Latham, his wife.

RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber JFF 11, folio 298.

DATE: August 8, 1889.

NOTES: Transfer of "the store House, Dwelling, and Lot situated and lying in the village of Mechanicsville." Price: \$1700

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8.3 Significance

TO: J. Woodley Latham

FROM: John T. Ballenger and Margaret S. Ballenger, his wife.

RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber JFF 10, folio 162.

DATE: September 29, 1887.

NOTES: Transfer of the "Store House and Lot ... beginning at a stone planted in front of Mrs. George W. Burrough's Hotel and Dwelling house about 40 feet from said Hotel and opposite the northwest ____ and running in a straight line to the Three Notch Road leading through Mechanicsville to a stone planted near said road, thence with said road to a stone planted near said road until it intersects the Lot of John T. Ballenger upon which a Blacksmith Shop is erected, thence in a straight line to a stone planted on the public road leading to All Faith Church opposite Sylvester Adams Blacksmith Shop or until it intersects the Lot belonging to Mrs. George W. Burroughs, then in a straight line to an oak stump and thence in a straight line to the place of beginning..."

TO: John T. Ballenger

FROM: Richard T. Copsey

RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber JFF 10, folio 102.

DATE: August 13, 1887.

NOTES: Transfer of the "Store House and lot...bounded on the one side by the Three Notch Road on another by the Lot belonging to J.T.Ballenger, on another by the lot belonging to George H. Burroughs, and on another by the lot belonging to Mrs. Walter Mattingly..." Price: \$1005

TO: Richard T. Copsey

FROM: George T. Burroughs

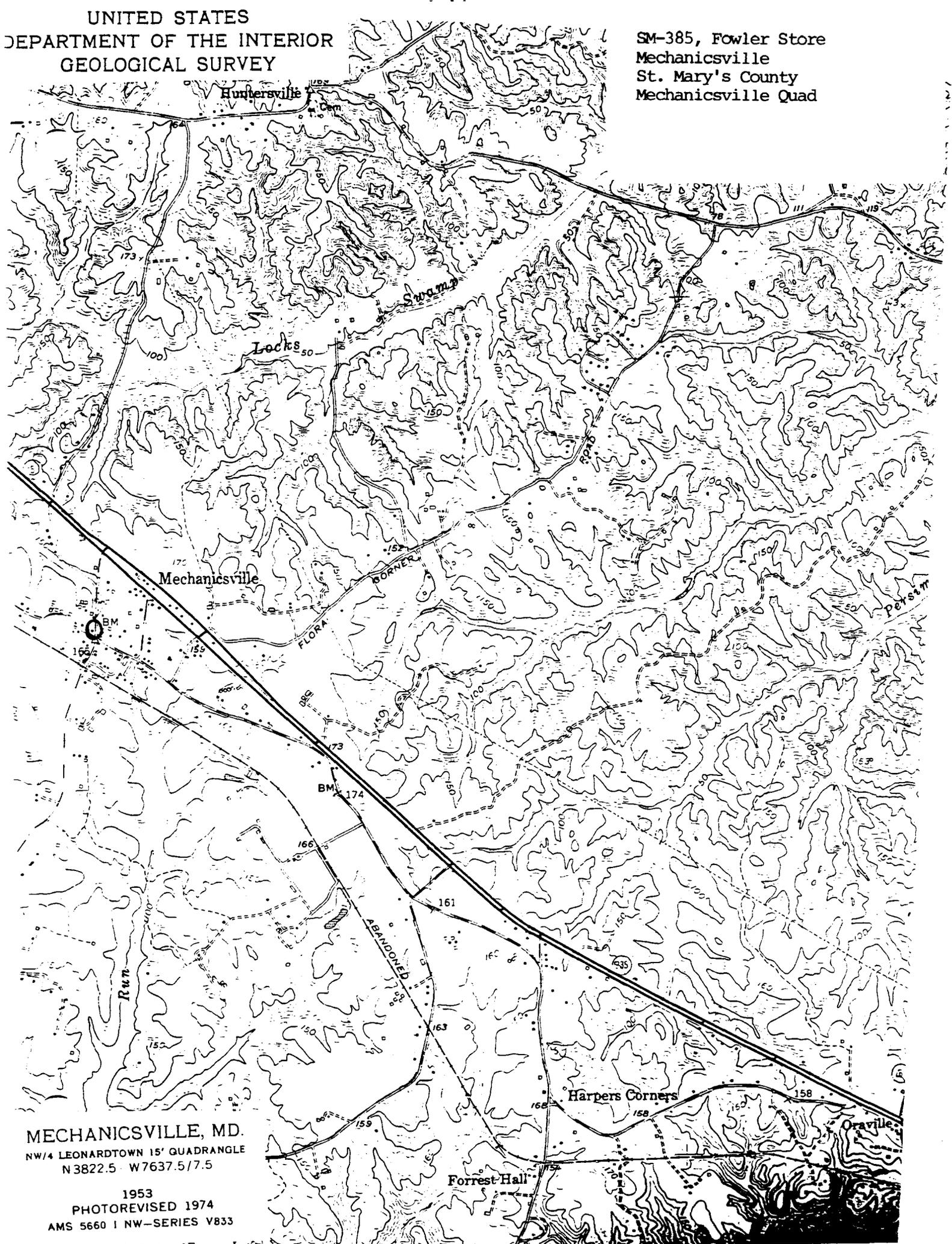
RECORD: St. Mary's County Testamentary Records, Liber JTMR 1, folio 337.

DATE: October 28, 1873.

NOTES: Item V: "I give and bequeath to Richard T. Copsey the Store house and lot in Mechanicsville, barn excepted, embracing about two acres more or less, with the exception also of 1/3 of the rents of said storehouse and lot, which excepted third I wish to be paid to Lydia Ann Copsey until she comes in possession of the house and lot on which I now live...[after which] she shall have no more claims on rents of the storehouse and Richard T. Copsey will have the entire storehouse and lot in fee simple." Regarding the barn, he also notes in Item V, "I also wish the barn on the Store house lot in Mechanicsville to be for the use of Mrs. Margaret E. Copsey for farm purposes, until Richard T. Copsey comes of age." It seems likely that George Burroughs originally purchased this property as a vacant lot and subsequently erected a building here for use as a storehouse. Descriptions of properties transferred to George Burroughs prior to 1873 are not very specific, so it is unclear from whom he purchased this lot. One possibility is a 3 3/4 acre lot located on Three Notch Road which he purchased from Charles M. Bond Jr. in 1860 (JTB 3/416) for \$125.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

SM-385, Fowler Store
Mechanicsville
St. Mary's County
Mechanicsville Quad



MECHANICSVILLE, MD.
NW/4 LEONARDTOWN 15' QUADRANGLE
N 3822.5 W 7637.5/7.5

1953
PHOTOREVISED 1974
AMS 5660 1 NW-SERIES V833







ON 385, JOHN A. MILLER STADI

ON 1140, JOHN A. MILLER

ELIOTT STADI

1140 STADI

1140

1140 STADI

1140



EM. 385, JOHN A. TOWLER STONE

ST. MARY'S COUNTY, MD

CLIPSTONE BRIDGE

NEEDED FOR

MD. STATE

NE ELEVATION

4/6



J. A. FOWLER & SON
WITTS SHOE

WITTS SHOE

SINCLAIR
HC
GASOLINE



