

William and Mary Anne Fowler

William Fowler arrived in the Colony on 8 January 1846 per *Elizabeth*. In 1848, he was appointed to help at New Norcia, but he relinquished this position when Bishop Salvado left for Europe and he went to Dardanup. On 1 September 1851, at Fremantle, he married Maria Anna Cleary.¹ She appears to have mostly used the names Mary Anne rather than Maria Anna.

In about 1852, William was appointed the "Commissariat Storekeeper" for the York Convict Establishment,² a government position, for which he received a salary. His job was to provide supplies to convicts and others working for the Government. He did this from the Comptroller's store, which was located near the river at the end of South Street.

One of his tasks was to look after the Government Hay Stack near York and in that capacity, in February 1854, he advertised that he had found two head of cattle.³

Despite rumours that he had resigned as Commissariat Storekeeper,⁴ he continued to operate the government store, but at the same time, in May 1854, he started trading his own store. He advertised that he had "commenced the business of General Storekeeper" in Bland Street, York. The advertisement lists the stock he was offering, and this list goes on for 25 paragraphs.⁵

Fowler was renting his property (part of Avon Location U and V) from David Ronayne and was paying £70 a year rent.⁶

Fowler must have come under pressure to stop trading, so in June he promised the Governor that he would no longer trade personally and that another member of his family would be doing any trading.⁷

Despite rumours that he had resigned as Commissariat Storekeeper,⁸ he continued to operate the government store, but at the same time, started trading his own store personally. In May 1854, for example, William Fowler started advertised a store in Bland Street.^{9 10 11}

One story was that he had resigned but he was "urgently solicited to resume the situation of "Assistant Commissariat storekeeper". At all events, he continued to be Commissariat storekeeper but his own store, he said, would be carried on by another member of his family.¹²

¹ Rica Erickson: Dictionary of Western Australians, p.1108.

² Rica Erickson: Dictionary of Western Australians, p.1108.

³ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 10 February 1854, p.2.

⁴ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 12 May 1854, p.2; Inquirer 24 May 1854, p.1..

⁵ Inquirer, 17 May 1854, p.1; repeated 24 May 1854, p.1.

⁶ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 10 October 1856, p.1.

⁷ REFERENCE

⁸ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 12 May 1854, p.2; Inquirer 24 May 1854, p.1..

⁹ Inquirer 17 May, 1854, p.1.

¹⁰ Inquirer 24 May, 1854, p.1.

¹¹ Inquirer, 31 May 1854, p.2.

¹² Inquirer, 14 June 1854, p.3.

This person, it seems, was Mary Anne Fowler, his wife. Mrs Fowler was not in the best position to be running a business because, around this time, on 29 August 1854, Mrs Fowler gave birth to a son, which birth was very loudly announced in two newspapers of the time.^{13 14} She was also looking after one year old, John, and two year old, Thomas.¹⁵

Mrs Fowler offered a range of stock in a series of monthly ads from 14 June to December 1854.^{16 17 18}
19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 Advertisements did cease from the birth of her son in August and 4 October.

The wording of the 1 November 1854 advertisement was as follows:

“Groceries, preferred fruits, jams, pickles, cheese, Irish pork, Epsom salts, sago, arrowroot, oatmeal, patent groats, soap, tobacco pipes.

Drapery, millinery, hosiery, and haberdashery, pocket books and knives, letter paper, pens and ink, umbrellas, parasols, toys, blankets, rugs and sheets, ladies boots and shoes, men’s ditto, children’s do, ladies’ brooches, tea trays, tea and sugar, canisters, gunpowder, shot, and percussion caps, cut glass, looking glasses, Eau de cologne and lavender water etc.
Produce taken in exchange.”

Fowler was noted as being Commissariat in a trial in which he gave evidence on 3 January 1855.^{29]}

It must have been difficult for anyone trying to compete with John Henry Monger Snr. As Janet Millett noted:

“...many of the settlers have so long been accustomed to look upon some one or other of the store-keepers as their factor and banker combined, sending him all their wool and produce of every description and drawing money from him when they require any advances, that they are completely in his power, and dare not go to any newly-established store for fear of his anger; thus much of the trade would be out of the new-comer’s reach, however

¹³ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 8 September 1854, p.2.

¹⁴ Inquirer, 6 September 1854, p.2.

¹⁵ Rica Erickson: Dictionary of Western Australians, p.1108.

¹⁶ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 9 June 1854, p.2.

¹⁷ Inquirer, 14 June 1854, p.3.

¹⁸ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 16 June 1854, p.4.

¹⁹ Inquirer, 21 June 1854, p.4.

²⁰ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 23 June 1854, p.4.

²¹ Inquirer, 28 June 1854, p.4.

²² Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 30 June 1854, p.4.

²³ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 14 July 1854, p.4.

²⁴ Inquirer, 23 August 1854, p.4.

²⁵ Inquirer, 4 October 1854, p.4.

²⁶ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 6 October 1854, p.4.

²⁷ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 17 November 1854, p.1.

²⁸ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 24 November 1854, p.4.

²⁹ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 5 January 1855, p.3.

low might be his prices for stores supplied, however high the offers he might make for the purchase of colonial produce.³⁰

Mrs Fowler ceased trading in May 1855 and offered her “Grant and Store” for sale, advertised as being “in one of the best positions in York for trade”. This indicates that by then, what might have previously been a leasehold had become a freehold.

The property and store were purchased by another woman Mrs C B Hamer who advertised in a series of advertisements:³¹

“C HAMER begs respectfully to inform the inhabitants of York and the neighbourhood that she has purchased from Mr Fowler the premises lately occupied by him, where she has commenced a GENERAL STORE with every article for Consumption and use of the best quality. Assorted stock of ladies and gentlemen’s clothing of the best and cheapest description, all kinds of fancy trimmings, hair nail and tooth brushes, tinware, crockery etc. C Hamer trusts by strict attention to business to merit a share of their support.”³²

Mrs C B Hamer did not last long. She got into debt and sold “all her right and interest in the house, premises, and business” to her major competitor John Henry Monger Snr. Monger was also given a power of attorney to receive all debts due to Mrs Hamer and discharge all claims against her. Mrs Hamer announced she intended to leave the colony.³³ Joseph Monger commenced to run her store in June 1858.³⁴ The property was one of the properties in John Henry Monger Snr’s estate that was left to his son Joseph.³⁵

The Fowlers and (by then) their 6 children left for the Eastern States on 8 March 1863.^{36 37}

³⁰ Janet Millett, *An Australian Parsonage*, p. 393.

³¹ Mrs Hamer arrived in the Colony on 28 January 1854 on the *Isabella Blythe*. She may have been the wife of ticket of leaver Joseph Hamer: Rica Erickson: *Dictionary of Western Australians*, p.1329.

³² The first of these was dated 29 June 1856 and was published in *Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News* 4 July 1856, p.2.

³³ *Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News* 20 November 1857, p.3; 11 December 1857, p.6.

³⁴ *Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News* 18 June 1858, p.1.

³⁵ *Landgate, Deeds and Ordinances VI/390/2453: Last will and testament of John Henry Monger* 10 August 1867.

³⁶ Rica Erickson: *Dictionary of Western Australians*, p.1108.

³⁷ William and Mary Anne Fowler were living in Goulburn, NSW, in 1886: *Goulburn Herald* 5 January 1886, p.2. There are a number of references on Trove to William Fowler who was post master in Campbelltown, NSW, and who then became a magistrate, but this could not be the same person as he had worked as post master since 1846: *Sydney Morning Herald* 11 June 1863, p.2.