

CAPSULE SUMMARY

CT-105

Bowen's Store and Post Office

Adelina Road and Sixes Road

Prince Frederick, Calvert County

Ca. 1882

Private

Bowen's Store and Post Office is located at the intersection of Adelina Road and Sixes Road in Bowens, Calvert County, Maryland. Silas W. Bowen built the store following the purchase of a two-and-a-half-acre parcel of land in 1882. In 1887, postal service was established in the building. Thomas and Ella Lusby owned the store from 1902 to 1940, during which time it was a popular meeting place for local residents, and an important rallying point for politicians and preachers. In 1940, Frank Coster, who retained ownership of the property until 1972, acquired the store. During this period, the store was known as Coster's Store. Coster resided in the one-story wing on the north elevation of the store. By the early 1960s, the store was no longer operating. Bowen's Store and Post Office is a rare and intact example of a late-19th-century community general store and post office in Calvert County.

Constructed circa 1882, the vacant building is set close to the road and is surrounded by overgrown trees and shrubs. Set on a brick pier foundation, the wood-frame, vernacular building rises one-and-a-half stories in height and three bays in width. The structure has been enlarged by a one-story, gable-roofed addition that is also three bays in width. The store is clad in weatherboard and has a cross-gable roof with corrugated metal sheeting. A central interior brick chimney has been demolished. Extending across the façade of the main block is a one-story, three-bay-wide porch with square wood post supports.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. CT-105

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Bowen's Store and Post Office (preferred)
 other Coster's Store

2. Location

street and number Adelina Road and Sixes Road not for publication
 city, town Prince Frederick vicinity
 county Calvert

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

name Samuel J. and Faye B. Hammett
 street and number 4480 Sixes Road telephone 410/535-0743
 city, town Prince Frederic state MD zip code 20678

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Calvert County Courthouse tax map and parcel: M26, P239
 city, town Prince Frederic liber JLB folio 397

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- Contributing Resource in National Register District
- Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
- Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
- Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
- Recorded by HABS/HAER
- Historic Structure Report or Research Report
- Other

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count	
			Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	1	
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense		
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic		
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education		
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	1	0
		<input type="checkbox"/> government		
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care		
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry		
		<input type="checkbox"/> landscape		
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture		
		<input type="checkbox"/> religion		
		<input type="checkbox"/> social		
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress		
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use		
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:		
			Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory	
			0	

7. Description

Inventory No. CT-105

Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

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

Bowen's Store and Post Office is located at the northwest corner of Sixes and Adelina Roads in Bowens, Calvert County, Maryland. Constructed circa 1882, the vacant building is set close to the road and is surrounded by overgrown trees and shrubs. Set on a brick pier foundation, the wood-frame, vernacular building rises one-and-a-half stories in height and three bays in width. The structure has been enlarged by a one-story, gable-roofed addition that is also three bays in width. The store is clad in weatherboard and has a cross-gable roof with corrugated metal sheeting. A central interior brick chimney has been demolished. Extending across the façade of the main block is a one-story, three-bay-wide porch with square wood post supports.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The façade or east elevation of the store is comprised of both the main block and the one-story addition. The main block is pierced by a centrally located double-leaf, two-panel wood door that is framed by a square-edged wood surround with a slightly molded wood lintel. Flanking the entry are 6/6 windows with square-edged surrounds and metal security bars. Several of the panes of glass in the windows have been broken. A mail slot lies beneath the window to the north of the entry. Further adorning the main block is a center gable peak with a round-arched window opening that has been boarded shut with plywood. The porch, which is set on a panel-faced concrete-block pier foundation, features a half-hipped roof with scroll-sawn exposed rafter tails. The one-story wood-frame extension lies to the north of the main block and stands three bays in width. It is set on a stone pier foundation and is covered by a side-gabled roof of corrugated metal. Piercing the addition are three 6/6 windows, two of which feature metal security bars. The third window on the addition has been boarded shut with plywood.

On the north elevation, the first story of the main block is obscured by the one-story addition. A single window opening that has been boarded shut with plywood is visible on the upper half-story of the main block. There are no openings on the north elevation of the addition.

Due to excessive tree growth and overgrown vegetation, the west elevation was not accessible at the time of survey. The south elevation is pierced at the first story by a single window opening with metal security bars. At the upper half-story of the south elevation is a single opening access door that had a beam used for lifting supplies with a block and tackle.

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The interior of Bowen's Store and Post Office was not accessible at the time of survey. According to owner Jack Hammett, the interior of the store features wood wainscoting and built-in wide counters and shelves. (1)

ENDNOTES

(1) Jack Hammett, Phone conversation with Jenny Plummer-Welker, July 16, 2002.

8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime industry	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

Specific dates c1882 **Architect/Builder** Unknown

Construction dates c1882: 1930

Evaluation for:

National Register Maryland Register not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance reports, complete evaluation on a DOE Form - see manual.)

Bowen's Store and Post Office is located at the intersection of Adelina Road and Sixes Road in Bowens, Calvert County, Maryland. Silas W. Bowen built the store following the purchase of a two-and-a-half-acre parcel of land in 1882. In 1887, postal service was established in the building. Thomas and Ella Lusby owned the store from 1902 to 1940, during which time it was a popular meeting place for local residents, and an important rallying point for politicians and preachers. In 1940, Frank Coster, who retained ownership of the property until 1972, acquired the store. During this period, the store was known as Coster's Store. Coster resided in the one-story wing on the north elevation of the store. By the early 1960s, the store was no longer operating. Bowen's Store and Post Office is a rare and intact example of a late-19th-century community general store and post office in Calvert County.

THE GENERAL STORE IN CALVERT COUNTY

Bowen's Store and Post Office is an excellent example of a late-19th-century rural general store in Calvert County. Perhaps more than any other building type in Calvert County, the general store is rich with associations for the generations of county residents who purchased basic goods and socialized at neighborhood general stores their entire lives. At the turn of the 20th century, Calvert County was populated with dozens of country general stores, located in small towns or along rural transportation routes, both land and water.

The "general" store was so named because of the general nature of items carried. First and foremost in the country general store was the agricultural and livestock merchandise such as feed, seeds for planting, small tools and supplies such as rope and nails. Fishing, oystering and crabbing supplies such as bait, nets and cages would have been sold in many stores, as well, particularly in the late 19th and early 20th centuries with the rise of the seafood industry in Calvert County. Basic food items, primarily dry goods, were carried as well, such as flour and salt, and to a lesser extent perishable items such as freshly butchered meats and dairy products. Availability of perishable items such as meats, dairy products, fruits and vegetable, before refrigeration became readily accessible in the second quarter of the 20th century would have been periodic, with local butchers or farmers delivering fresh items in relatively small quantities. Some storeowners stocked freshly butchered meat from their own livestock for sale in the store. Most county residents, however, would have such items supplied on their own farm. Already prepared food, such as is common in gas station convenience stores today, was uncommon in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but by the mid-20th century many general stores offered prepared foods such as cold cut sandwiches or even had a grill. According to Ralph Hutchins, a patron and life-long resident of Calvert County, the Bowen's Store sold flour, sugar, molasses, dry goods, candy, clothing, nails, kerosene, and motor oil. During the 1930s, a loaf of bread cost nine cents at the store. Additionally, an icehouse once stood on the property, providing ice for nearby residents. (1)

Tobacco products, toiletries, newspapers and other periodical publications and medicines were an essential component of the

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Name Bowen's Store and Post Office (preferred)

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general store, which featured a variety of painkillers, tonics and elixirs, and other general remedies. General stores frequently carried sweets and sodas, as well, the latter deriving from general store medicine tonics and achieving its current popularity by introduction in country general stores of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Many general stores also carried basic apparel for the rural residents engaged in agricultural or maritime pursuits. Standard items included farming and fishing apparel such as overalls and cotton shirts or waterproof gear, underwear, socks and shoes, as well as more luxury items such as collared shirts, dresses and hats. Small gifts and toys were also common in the general store. Following the introduction of gasoline-powered automobiles and boats, gasoline fuel pumps became a major component to the general store, both along automobile, railroad and water routes. Like these other general stores, Bowen's Store had a gasoline pump outside and sold five gallons of gasoline for one dollar in the 1930s.

In addition to stocking basic goods and necessities, the country general store also provided a variety of services to the rural and small town residents. As described above, general stores frequently contained local post offices where patrons could retrieve and post mail, or send money orders. Bowen's Store provided this same service to its customers, as evidenced by the mail slot on the façade of the building. The post office at Bowens operated from March 4, 1887 until April 30, 1957, however the entire length of operation was not based at Bowen's Store. (2) In the 1930s, the post office was moved to Mrs. Ada Hutchin's house and then to Brooke Hutchin's Store. General stores were often the first, and sometimes the only, location in the area to have a telephone, and residents would come substantial distances to make a telephone call to a friend or family members. Some general stores even had radios for the patrons to listen to while they carried out their business.

Wide front porches with chairs or interior seating areas were provided for the customers by the proprietor specifically to encourage social interaction which preserved the customer base and provided the proprietor, himself, with the opportunity to visit and catch up on local news and gossip. Such was the case at Bowen's Store, which had benches and a potbelly stove inside for cold weather and a wide front porch for the summer months. In some cases stores would stay open late in the evening and the men of the community would gather to talk, play cards, or listen to the radio, a regular occurrence at Bowens Store in Bowens. According to Ralph Hutchins, up to twenty men gathered nightly at the Bowen's Store to talk, listen to the Grand Ole Opry on the radio, play music, or play games, such as checkers or baseball. (3) Local residents and store proprietors knew one another, sometimes their entire lives, and visits to the store for both business and social purposes became part of their routine.

During the day, both men and women, black and white, would gather and socialize in the general store, as opposed to other meeting places such as schools and churches, the latter which were not only segregated by race, but very often sex as well. Evenings, however, when the general store stayed open late, were largely reserved for the men of the community. This was certainly the case with Bowen's Store, which was a nightly gathering place for the men of the area.

HISTORY OF BOWEN'S STORE AND POST OFFICE

The property on which Bowen's Store and Post Office stands was originally part of a large tract of land known as Buzzard Island. Silas Bowen purchased a two-and-a-half-acre tract in 1882 from James and Mary Hutchins for \$85. By 1884, when he sold the property back to Hutchins, the property was valued at \$2,000, indicating that the land had been improved during this two-year period. On June 11, 1889, the tract of land, including a dwelling house, storehouse, and other buildings, was sold at a sheriff's sale to Emory F. and Susie Lane for \$1,750. They in turn sold three parcels of land, including the one on which Bowen's Store stands, to Thomas Parran in 1902 for \$2,250. Parran immediately sold the property to Thomas and Ella Lusby for a \$250 profit. The Lusby's owned and operated the store until October 22, 1928, when it was leased to Daniel and Alma Wroten until 1932. Lusby retained ownership of the store until his death and in 1940.

Under Lusby's ownership, the function of the store as a local meeting place took hold, with local men gathering at the store almost every night to socialize. The store became recognized as an established meeting place not only for the local area, but also for the

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county as a whole. As such, it became a political gathering place as well, particularly near election times, when candidates would gather to give speeches. Ralph Hutchins indicated the political gathering at Bowen's Store was the largest in the county, and therefore, a major campaign location. As such, Bowen's Store was the last meeting of the Democrats in Calvert County on the night before the election. It also became the focal point of Evangelical preachers, who annually set up camp meetings on a neighboring lot during the summer months. (4)

At Lusby's death in 1940, the executor of his Last Will and Testament sold the property to Frank Coster, a distant relative. Coster, who served as a Trial Magistrate in Prince Frederick, the county seat of Calvert County, lived in the one-story north addition while he operated the store. During this period the store was called simply "Coster's Store," not to be confused with another store of the same name in the southern Calvert County community of Coster. Residents remember Coster's Store as a popular meeting place that was lit by single light bulbs hanging on wires. Coster, who was afflicted with polio, retained ownership of the property until 1972, when it was sold to Samuel J. and Faye Hammett. Deeds indicate that Coster retained the right to use the store building, despite the fact that he was no longer the owner. Oral history indicates that the store closed in the late 1950s or early 1960s, yet other accounts suggest it closed in the 1970s. (5) After the store was closed, the building was vandalized and has stood vacant since that time. Shortly after purchasing Coster's Store, Jack Hammett offered to sell it to the Calvert County Government. (6) In 1979, the Hammetts sold the surrounding property to Jon and Lonnie Frank, but retained ownership of the small lot on which Bowen's Store and Post Office stands.

CHAIN OF TITLE

September 14, 1882: James S. and Mary C. Hutchins to Silas W. Bowen
Land Records of Calvert County
Liber SS 5, Folio 244

July 3, 1884: Silas W. Bowen to James S. Hutchins
Land Records of Calvert County
Liber SS 6, Folio 290

August 12, 1889: James J. Hance to Emory F. Lane and Susie A. Lane
Land Records of Calvert County
Liber JS 2, Folio 192

January 14, 1902: Emory F. Lane and Susie A. Lane to Thomas Parran
Land Records of Calvert County
Liber GWD 2, Folio 506

January 31, 1902: Thomas Parran and Annie G. Parran to Thomas F. Lusby and
Ella E. Lusby
Land Records of Calvert County
Liber GWD 2, Folio 534

October 22, 1928: Thomas F. and Ella E. Lusby to Daniel and Alma E. Wroten
Land Records of Calvert County
Liber AAH 21, Folio 95

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December 7, 1932: Daniel and Alma E. Wroten to Thomas F. Lusby
Land Records of Calvert County
Liber AAH 30, Folio 226

July 24, 1940: Maurice T. Lusby, Executor for the Last Will and Testament
of Thomas F. Lusby, to Frank L. Coster
Land Records of Calvert County
Liber AAH 44, Folio 230

September 26, 1972: Frank L. Coster to Samuel J. and Faye B. Hammett
Land Records of Calvert County
Liber JLB 147, Folio 509

November 30, 1972: Frank L. Coster to Samuel J. and Faye B. Hammett
Confirmatory Deed
Land Records of Calvert County
Liber JLB 150, Folio 397

ENDNOTES

1. Ralph Hutchins, interview by Robin J. Weidlich, Prince Frederick, MD, April 25, 2002.
2. "Calvert County Post Offices," Post Offices, Vertical Files, Calvert County Historical Society, Prince Frederick, MD.
3. Hutchins.
4. Hutchins.
5. Hutchins.
6. Maurice T. Lusby, III, interview by Jenny Plummer-Welker, Prince Frederick, MD, July 16, 2002.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 0.18 acres

Acreage of historical setting unknown

Quadrangle name Broomes Island

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

Bowen's Store and Post Office has been associated with Parcel 239, as denoted on Tax Map 26, since circa 1884.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title R. Weidlich and C. Albee, Architectural Historians

organization E.H.T. Traceries, Inc.

dat 8/26/02

street and number 1121 Fifth Street, N.W.

telephone 202/393-1199

city or town Washington

stat DC zip code 20001

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville MD 21032
410-514-7600

**Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Inventory of
Historic Properties Form**

Inventory No. CT-105

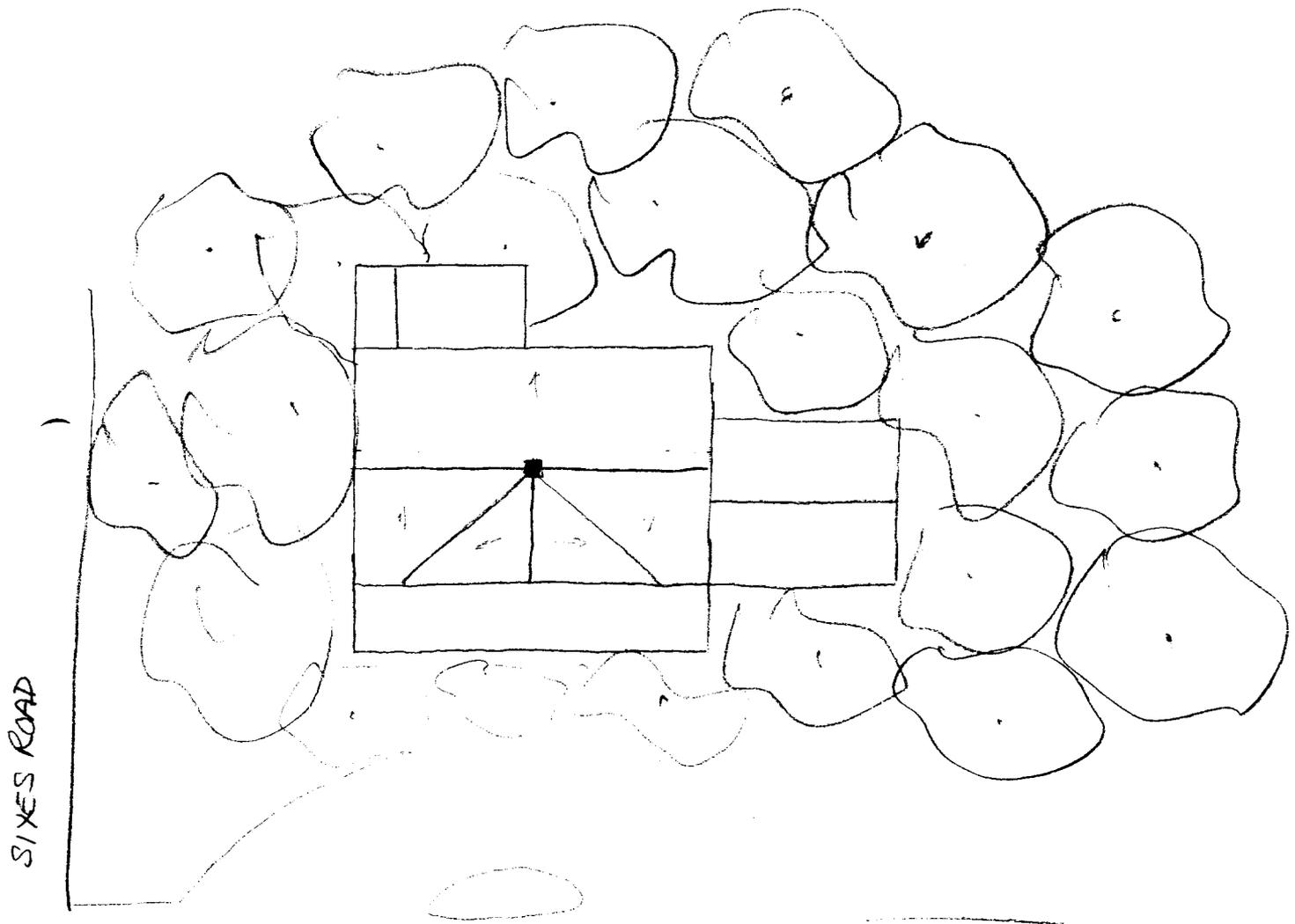
Name Bowen's Store and Post Office (preferred)

Continuation Sheet

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Hutchins, Ralph, interview by Robin J. Weidlich, Prince Frederick, Maryland, April 25, 2002.

N →



SIXES ROAD

Adelina RD

RESOURCE SKETCH MAP
CT-105
BOWEN'S STORE AND POST OFFICE
ADELINA ROAD AND SIXES ROAD
PRINCE FREDERICK, CALVERT
COUNTY, MD

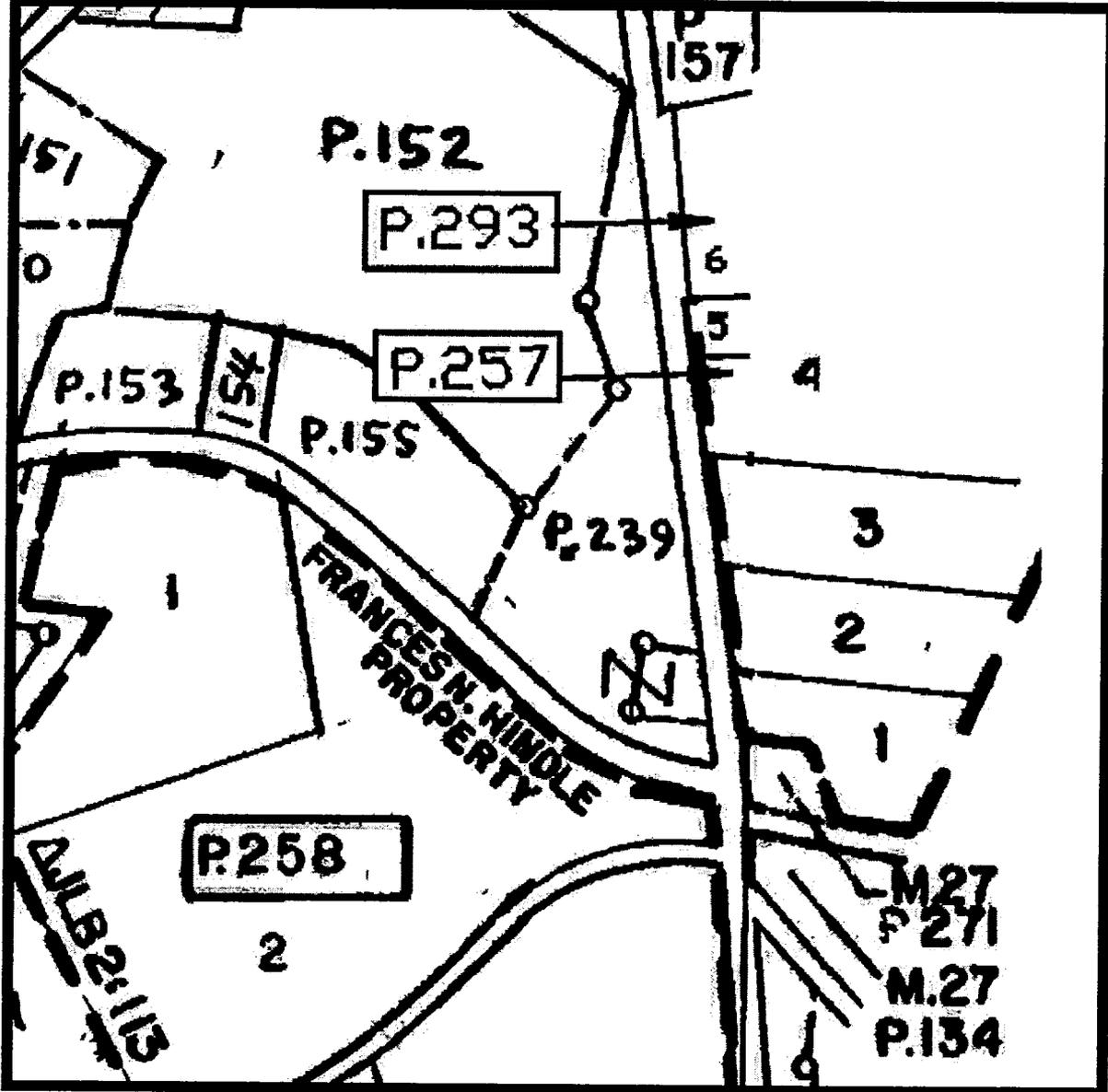
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District - 02 Account Number - 049341



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web site at www.mdp.state.md.us



CT-105

Bowen's Store and Post Office

Adelina and Gires Roads

Calvert County, MD

ENT Traceries

April 2002

Maryland SHPO

East Elevation, View Southwest



ST-03

Bauer's Store and Post Office

Delira and Foxes Roads

Calvert County MD

SHR Traceries

Hipol Base

Maryland SHRO

Northeast Corner, View Southwest

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