

Resource Number: PU3142
Historic Name: FOWLER, ABSALOM HOUSE
Alternate Historic Name:
Located in a district: MACARTHUR PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT
Address: 502 E 7TH ST
Listed or National Historic Landmark: Listed
Date of National Register Listing: 6/4/1973
Architect: FOWLER, ABSOLOM
Primary Style Influences:
Secondary Style Influences:

'Fowler, a lawyer said to have once thrown an inkwell at Chester Ashley, cutting him over the eye, called the house "Magnolia"; its later Owners, the Gracie family, called it the "Gracie Mansion." The Gracies sold it to the Catholic Diocese.'

From an article titled "The 15 oldest houses in Pulaski County" by the Arkansas Times Staff published January 1, 2015 <https://arktimes.com/news/cover-stories/2015/01/01/the-15-oldest-houses-in-pulaski-county>

With fan-shaped transoms over the doorways in Federal style and Ionic columns of the Greek Revival, this simple house features a two-story building to its west - probably the original kitchen and servants' quarters - and is the only original freestanding one still in existence. The home is now part of an apartment complex known as The Residences at Gracie Mansion.

From Quapaw Quarter Association Historic Homes Tour, printed 2014

"The Fowler House was built in 1840 for attorney Absalom Fowler and his wife, Elvira. Fowler served in the Territorial Legislature in 1835, and in 1836 he helped draft Arkansas's first state constitution.

"After Absalom Fowler's death in 1859, the home was sold. Its next prominent Owners was John D. Adams, Owners and operator of a steamboat line on the Arkansas and Mississippi rivers. John and Kate Adams were friends with Confederate President Jefferson Davis and author Samuel Clemens (better known as Mark Twain). Davis and Clemens reportedly visited the Fowler House while Adams owned the property.

"Another notable figure, John M. Gracie, purchased the Fowler House in 1894. Gracie owned a plantation at New Gascony (south of Pine Bluff in Jefferson County), and he purchased the Fowler House to serve as his "town home." At one time, Gracie owned three cotton plantations totaling 26,000 acres, supposedly making him the largest individual Owners of land planted in cotton in the world. However, cotton prices dropped by 1920, and in 1923 Gracie sold the Fowler House to the Catholic Diocese of Little Rock.

"The Diocese operated St. Andrew's Catholic School and day care center here from 1923 until the fall of 1976, when they sold the Fowler House to the real estate development firm of Barnes, Quinn, Flake & Anderson with the stipulation that no changes be made to the exterior of the building. In 1976-77 the Fowler House was divided into apartments and five two-story apartment buildings were constructed around the main house (using red brick because that was the original brick on the main house before it was painted white)."

From "MacArthur Park Historic District Walking Tour" 10/23/13
By: Rachel Silva, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

Partial list of Occupants:

Absalom and Elvira Fowler
John D and Kate Adams
John M. Gracie
Catholic Diocese of Little Rock
converted into apartments

Additional info:

For more information on **Absalom Fowler**, see the Encyclopedia of Arkansas:
<https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/absalom-fowler-3540/>

To view the **Quapaw Quarter Historic Homes Tour**:

<http://www.littlerock.org!/userfiles/editor/docs/planning/hdc/QQA%20tour%202014.pdf>

Read the **Sandwiching in History Tour** by the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program for this property.

<http://www.arkansaspreservation.com/Learn-More/sandwiching-in-history-archives>