



A new look for Freeman's Store - June 18, 1981

Irv Freeman Is No Longer Moored To Last Authentic General Store

**Sells Entire East End Property To John I. Shaw—Will Buy
Boat For Long, Lazy Cruise Into Southern Waters—
Ends Three Decades As Shopkeeper**

"It's taken me 32 years to do it, but at last I am free to come and go as I want to, without being tied down to this store, day in, day out, week after week, and, brother, I'm going to come and go."

So with bright eyes, gleaming even more brightly than usual behind white bushy eyebrows, A. Irving Freeman, for more than three decades the keeper of one of Cape Cod's few remaining authentic general stores, told how he sold to John I. Shaw, at one time merchandise manager for the Provincetown Light and Power Company, now local representative for Tilo products, and active member of the Provincetown Board of Trade, his store, marine railway, buildings and shop at 491 Commercial Street. The deal was concluded Tuesday and the new owner took possession yesterday.

What is Irv going to do?

He's going to realize a lifelong ambition. Always a lover of the sea and of boats, he'll probably buy that 43-foot, Crosby built yawl, knock-about type, with a new Gray motor, that's for sale up-Cape, outfit it for a long, slow easy cruise to southern waters and spend a lazy winter in Florida ports, without a care in the world. At every stop he'll look up the general store in the town to talk sympathetically with the counter-bound proprietor.

At 72 Irv Freeman, who holds a navigation, engineer and passenger marine license doesn't want to be tied down any more. "Been down town just twice this summer," he said as he held up two fingers for emphasis. Around him ranged the stock of his general store with so many different items on shelves and in ancient showcases that even he couldn't guess how many. "Got as many as a chain store and a damned sight more," he ventured.

Well, there were steel wool and corn flakes, light bulbs, garbage cans, films, bubble gum, school supplies, hardware, carpenter's tools, canned foods, ice cream, candy, "kerosene for sale," milk, drug sundries, gift wrappings, garden tools, gifts, butter, post cards, alarm clocks, cigarettes (with a pasted up clipping in the case warning that "Cigarettes Rob Young Girls of Health" by Angelo Patri). Freeman's General Store also has the agency for the sale of all Government geodetic maps, charts and tide-tables in these parts and Irv

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Mr. Freeman behind his Counter,
where he is always ready to
sell "a little bit of ev-
erything" and a choice
bit of gossip - free!
- September 1948 -



Freeman's Store, now a Home - June 14, 1977

says it is not at all uncommon to be routed out of bed any time of the night to get a certain chart for a boat owner.

Before Mr. Freeman started the general store business 32 years ago this month in its present location the site had been used as a junk shop operated by Josiah Swift. But he remembers the present two-and-a-half story building with its double brick wall basement being constructed by Ben Snow. The property includes a marine railway with tidal land bought from the State, a workshop with apartment above, a completely equipped workshop and boat storage yard.

Even many of Irv's friends don't know that he started out to be an architect, took long and careful training in the profession, designed and supervised the construction of a number of houses, and is also a trained and skilled machinist. For some years he was employed by the lighthouse repair department of the Federal government and was sent

from one lighthouse to another to inspect, repair and make improvements. He put in the first automatic clock the government ever had installed in a lighthouse and that was at Race Light where it is still in use. It had to be adjusted to second-precision as it is used to blow the fog signal and must sound-off at exact intervals. His work as well as his seafaring inclinations have carried him to every Atlantic port of Canada and the United States.

Mr. and Mrs. Shaw, the new owners will carry on much the same type of business which has made the Freeman General Store one of the interest points of the town, and they will retain the name.

But Irv will hoist sail and set his course for the open seas of sunlit freedom as befits a skipper who has earned the right by his long stint on land.

No more carpet tacks, baby oil, shoe laces and cigarettes, especially cigarettes.