

'End Of An Era' As King's Market Sold

"It's the end of an era," Karen King said Monday after the announcement that King's Market in Friday Harbor had been sold after about 40 years as a part of the life of the King family. The sale will not be final until after the first of the year, but the new owner will be managing the business from now until then. This will give the Kings a chance to get used to their decision as well as give Verne Howard, the prospective owner, a chance to see how the business runs.

How do the Kings feel about selling? "I'm going to miss the personal contact with people that I have enjoyed for many years," Vi King said. But she also added that she is relieved to be getting out from under the pressures of the business. "It's the thing to do for our own sakes. The new man is excellent and I hope he will be well received." Vi said that she has looked forward to being out of the business, but that as people come into the store to talk to her about the sale, "I get a funny feeling."

Blair King, who has spent all of his adult life working at King's Market, sat under a picture of his

(Continued on Page 8)



FOUNDER OF KING'S MARKET, Lyle King, with his wife, Jeannette.

Era At End With Market Sale

(Continued from Page 1)

father Lyle King, who started the grocery in the early 30's, and said, "It was time. The work load gets harder as you get older." The business is all that was sold, he said, and he still owns the building as well as one across Spring Street and some other property on the island. Much of his time will be taken up managing those properties after the sale is final.

"But I'll miss the people and being where there is a lot going on," he added. Blair said that the drugstore and the bank are the only establishments in town that have a long history of being family businesses besides King's. But King's is "one of the longest held family businesses in the county," he added. He doesn't feel too bad about ending that tradition, "It's been good to us. This is an exciting business where different things are always happening. We feel that we've sold the store to someone who will keep it for a long time. I'm not overly happy, but I'm not unhappy either. It's the right thing to do."

Their son Rick King has been in the business since he was 12, and his son Steven works in the store now as a box boy. Rick says that the decision was a family one and that he is undecided about what he will do when the sale is final. He and his

wife Karen want to stay on the island, he said, and he is looking forward to having more time to be with his family. He's been working 14 to 16 hours a day at the store and now wants to do what his kids are interested in doing.

The sale of the grocery, Rick said, was handled by Associated Grocers. The family has been debating selling since last spring and interviewed several people who were interested in buying. "Verne will fit the best into the community, and there was more emphasis on that than any other aspect," Rick said. "We were concerned about the future of the store."

Karen adds that she feels relieved but sentimental about the sale. And Steven, looking just like a member of the King clan in his striped apron, said, "It's okay with me." He hopes that he can still work at the counter once in a while though. The Kings have two other children, Jackie and Gregory, who are supposedly looking forward to traveling with their parents next year.

Verne Howard, new owner of the King's Market after the first of January, plans definitely to keep the name of the store. "There's too much good will attached to it to change it," he said.

Verne and his wife Mary have a

three and half year old daughter, Ashley, and are expecting another child. He feels very lucky to be taking over the Kings' business and feels it is an excellent opportunity.

"It's always been a goal of mine to buy a business," he said. His experience has been managing Thriftway stores for the past eight years. He has been in the grocery business for about 25 years. The most rewarding store he managed was in Everson where he had plenty of opportunity to get to know his neighbors. He is sure he will enjoy meeting the people of Friday Harbor at King's Market. He will be managing until the first of the year, when an inventory will be taken and the store will be turned over to him.