

The Freeman Store closed for business in 1929. The Freeman family continued to use the building for their insurance company and home into the 1950s. After that it was unoccupied and the property fell into disrepair. It was purchased by the Town of Vienna in 1969 and restoration work began in January 1975. The building was dedicated and reopened to the public on June 26, 1976, under the auspices of the Freeman House Advisory Committee. This group later was reorganized under the name Historic Vienna Incorporated which continues to work towards historic education and research.



The Freeman Store Candy Counter

The Store, operated by Historic Vienna, Inc. has a variety of merchandise including:

- Vienna Pottery, Blankets, Mugs, Tea Towels
- Notecards and Prints by Local Artists
- Books, Candy, Toys
- Vienna Ornaments
- Virginia Jams, Honey, Peanuts
- Local History Books
- Decorative Gifts
- Many Vienna and Virginia Themed Items

The Book Cellar, an ongoing used book sale, is featured in the basement.



Inside the Freeman Store



The Freeman Store today

Today Historic Vienna, Inc. operates a historic country store selling local history books, Virginia crafts, Vienna souvenirs and old-fashioned toys and candy. The former living space on the second floor contains a late 1800s merchant or middle class family parlor and dining room and a museum room for changing exhibits. All proceeds from sales at the Freeman Store support the activities and programs of Historic Vienna, Inc.

Thanks to *This Was Vienna, Virginia* by Connie and Mayo Stuntz and to research conducted by HistoryTech, LLC.

Historic photos from the Library of Congress

Historic Vienna, Inc.

History of the Freeman Store



Lydecker Store circa 1864

Visit Historic Vienna, Inc. at the
Freeman Store and Museum

131 Church St. NE, Vienna, VA 22180
703.938.5187

historicviennava@gmail.com

www.historicviennainc.org

Open Wednesday-Sunday, 12:00-4:00PM

Listed on **The Virginia Landmarks Register**
and
The National Register of Historic Places

**Strengthening Community Through an
Awareness of Vienna's Past**

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Historic Vienna Inc.



“Vienna” by Alfred R. Waud circa 1861

History of the Lydecker/Freeman Store

Throughout Vienna’s history the Freeman Store has been a store, home, train depot, hotel, hospital, officers’ quarters, fire department and historic site (the building is on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places). In 1859, Abram and Susan Lydecker, New Jersey merchants who had nine children, purchased land in Vienna, Virginia and built a large combination dwelling and store next to the newly built railroad tracks at the corner of what is now Church and Mill Street.

The lower level of this building became the town’s first general store. The railroad brought goods, gave access to distant markets and made commuting possible. In 1859 and 1860 Lydecker had a license for an ordinary (a place where meals can be served to travelers) and house of private entertainment. Most likely, this was a hotel located in the unheated two window wide section of the building (see picture on the front).

Documents indicate campaign parties were held for Constitutional Union presidential candidate John Bell, a southern Union preservationist who was third in the 1860 presidential race behind Lincoln and Breckinridge. On May 23, 1861, voters gathered at Lydecker’s Store to vote on the Virginia Ordinance of Secession. The town voted two to one to stay within the Union.

Abram Lydecker was imprisoned for 1.5 years during the war, in Richmond, VA and in Salisbury, NC. His wife and children returned to the north for the duration of the war. Southern claims document that Union soldiers were staying at the hotel at the start of the Civil War and some took their oath of allegiance there.

Vienna, unlike most of the surrounding countryside, was in the hands of the Federal army for most of the war and in 1863 a permanent camp was established in an attempt to entrap Mosby’s Raiders. Colonel Mosby and his men were famous for undermining the Union Army’s transport system, destroying rail lines, bridges, supply trains and for their ability to elude Union forces and blend in with farmers and townspeople. During the remainder of the war, the store was used as a billeting station and hospital while the basement was used for stabling officers’ horses.

After the war, the Lydeckers began to rebuild and expand into other businesses. By 1872 they were helped by their son-in-law and Abram’s new partner, Anderson Freeman. In 1874, Freeman and his wife Caroline Lydecker purchased the store, home and property consisting of several acres and a mill for a sum of \$2,500 from Abram Lydecker. The mill building was on the Freeman Accommodation Street which was later renamed Mill Street.

In 1890 Anderson Freeman served on the Vienna Town Council. In 1893, he appointed his eighteen year old son, Leon Lydecker Freeman, his business partner in the mercantile and mill business. The two window wide section of the building was moved over to Mill Street in 1894. The Vienna Presbyterian Church Sanctuary sits on that site today.

In 1894, Leon Freeman brought his bride, Hattie Belle Crocker, to Vienna and they moved into the new home on Mill Street. Leon operated the mercantile business until 1900 when he let it to the Maffett Brothers and the Freemans moved to Alexandria and later, to Washington, D.C., operating a succession of stores before returning to the Freeman Store.



The Freeman Store circa 1917

When Vienna formed the Volunteer Fire Department in 1903 as a bucket brigade, Leon Freeman was its first president. A hand-drawn chemical tank purchased later by the young department was stored at the Freeman Store. Leon Freeman served as Vienna’s mayor from 1912 to 1914 and he was on the Town Council for six years. He was a director of Vienna’s first bank, the Vienna National Bank. He also formed an insurance company. He served in the Virginia House of Delegates in 1929-1930.