

First National Cooperative Association of Maynard.

This association was born at the Finnish Congregational Church on Walnut Street in October, 1915, with a charter membership of forty-two. (Maynard News, Oct. 22, 1915.) As was mentioned in our paper on the United Cooperative Society of Maynard, this group of forty-two refused to go along with the vote of the Maynard Milk Producers' Cooperative to affiliate with the United Cooperative Society. Their reasons stemmed mainly from political differences as the United Cooperative Society leadership of that period had socialist leanings. The Rochdale principles of cooperation did not apparently prevent the dominant group from throwing its weight around.

The first store of the First National was just across the street from the United Coop Society - The corner store presently occupied by Western Auto Store. Milk was processed somewhere on Maynard Hill for home delivery and the store. It opened in March, 1916, approximately as the First Annual Report and meeting of the Society was reported in the Maynard News of March 2, 1917. The building (owned by the Naylor's,) housed also Banders Clothing Store, which later became the New Idea Store of Sam Lerer. A fire, reported Sept. 15, 1916 caused considerable damage to both establishments but was not fatal.

The Association bought the Somerset Hotel property on the corner of Main and River Streets (Mar. 26, 1920) and moved in June 11, 1920. This store is presently occupied by Jacob's Market. The milk room and bakery were added to this at the rear of the building. Membership fluctuated around the two hundred mark through the years. Some of the managers were

Lauri Koski, Waino Williams, Alex Sopanch, Toivo Niekki, Tuevo Krekula and Mr. Kaikkonen (first name missing).

The Association went bankrupt in 1941, due mostly to the leniency of the management and board of directors during the Great depression starting in 1929. Members charged or had to charge to fee themselves and unable finally to pay felt the Association (which was theirs, of course) should support them. And so passed into Maynard history another cooperative alongside the Riverside Coop and the Polish Coop.

All dates are from the Maynard News. I am also indebted for additional information to Ralph Sheridan, Mrs. Rachel Aho, and especially to Veeti Taival, sixteen and a half secretary to the Association.

Read at the November 1968 meeting of the Maynard
Historical Society - B.R. Koski.