

International Cooperative Association.

This cooperative was organized by the Polish people in Maynard with a sprinkling of Lithuanians and Russians. A census taken by Rev. Jablonski (Dec. 6, 1912) indicated that about 600 Polish people resided in town - a sizeable group. Most could not speak English well so it was only natural that a store catering to their needs, in their own language, was in order. A Dec. 23, 1910 newsnote informs us that the Polish people are to set up a Coop store. Jan. 6, 1911 The International Cooperative Association opened its doors in Higgin's Block, Main Street near the Methodist Church. Presently we have no knowledge of a Higgin's Block in town. Our understanding is the store opened up in the building housing the present United Coop Hardware Section.

With little business practice the coop floundered the first year, for a Feb. 9, 1912 newsnote informs us that there is trouble at the Polish coop - has been closed for several days. However, by Apr. 2, 1915 the Annual Meeting was told that everything was ship-shape.

In 1918 the coop moved to the Masonic block corner of Main and Walnut streets. In the early 1920's it added a bakery to its business. This was located in the building bearing number 120 Great Road. This building is presently a home. An enormous oven was in there up to recent times - maybe still is. The bakery closed its doors in the latter 1920's.

At the height of the Great Depression the coop went under - over extended in credit. An auction was held and Jacob Sawutz, an employee there for two years bought the business and continued it under private management (Mar. 27, 1931).

Our knowledge is very sparse, as you note. Membership is surmised to have been between 250-400 people. The life span of the coop was twenty years.

All dates are from the Maynard News. I am indebted to Jacob Sawutz for additional information

B.R. Koski - Read at the 1969 meeting of the Maynard Historical Society.