

UNITED COOPERATIVE SOCIETY - Opened its doors in January 1907. The stock and fixtures of a private grocery store were purchased and set up in part of the building on Main Street which is now the main Co-Op building. At first it was known as the Kaleva Co-operative Association, "Kaleva" being the ancient name of the Finnish people. The first manager was Matti Hekkala. The first eight years were lean and uncertain. They started with 187 members, mostly weavers and other workers in the local woolen mill, who received small wages; yet they subscribed \$1,600 for the Co-op's initial capital. Membership grew slowly, from 187 to 315, and annual sales fluctuated. In 1911, the Kaleva Co-op became a member of the Eastern Finnish Co-operative Educational League. In 1912, the present Co-op building on Main Street was purchased on a time payment plan for \$16,000. In 1914, they purchased property on Powder Mill Road and erected a combination bakery and salesroom. Since then the Co-op has regularly baked its own "democrat" rye bread. In 1915 the Co-operative League of the United States was established, with the Maynard Co-op as one of its charter members. In 1916, to meet the needs of its members, the Co-op added a meat department to the Main Store, and started a restaurant on the second floor of the Co-op building. During its peak years the restaurant served as many as 250 people a day. In 1917, the Maynard Co-operative Milk Association by a majority vote decided to become a part of the Kaleva Co-operative; thus the dairy department came into being, located originally on the Powder Mill Road property. Forty-two members of the Milk Association refused to

10
follow the majority and started a rival co-operative, the First National Co-operative Association, which continued until 1941. In 1919, six of the leading Finnish co-operatives in Massachusetts (Maynard, Fitchburg, Quincy, Norwood, Gardner and Worcester) pooled their capital and properties to create the so-called "Million-Dollar Co-operative". Incorporating under the name of the United Co-operative Society of New England, they set up a general office in Boston. This move caused the old familiar name of the Kaleva Co-operative Association to be discarded. But the "Million-Dollar Co-operative" experiment was doomed to fail, because the individual co-ops had not learned to co-operate with each other. The joint co-operative liquidated in 1921. After the dissolution, the Maynard society was re-incorporated under its present name of United Co-operative Society of Maynard. Since then expansion and improvement have been continuous. In 1921, the Bakery was moved from Powder Mill Road to the rear of the Main Street Store; a new oven and machinery were installed. In 1923, the Co-op established its own coal yard. Land was bought at a railroad siding off Summer Street; a new siding and coal storage warehouse constructed. In 1925, a large annex was added to the Main Store. The Dairy was moved to part of the new building, and new pasteurizing equipment enabled the Co-op to deliver the first pasteurized milk in town. The new structure also housed a repair garage for the growing fleet of trucks. In 1926, the Co-op purchased a small grocery store building (with its stock of merchandise) on the corner of Parker and Waltham Streets. This became the Co-op Branch Store. In 1928, became a charter member of the Eastern Co-operative Wholesale, Inc.

64 G

With the passing of time, the needs of the members have changed; some departments have been discontinued, others added. In 1930, the restaurant was closed. In 1931, a new service for its farmer members was started; grain, feeds, fertilizers, and other farm supplies were made available in a new warehouse built on the end of the coal sheds. In 1933, a fuel oil truck was purchased for the distribution of petroleum products. Ice delivery service was begun in the spring of 1934. The same year land on the corner of Parker and Waltham Streets was purchased (including the land on which the Branch Store was located), and a Gasoline Service Station was erected. Storage facilities for fuel and range oil were provided by the installation of three 10,000 gallon tanks at the coal yard. The Main Store was remodelled in 1935, and a new fish department was started. to provide better service, / In 1936, the old Branch Store building was torn down and a new completely modern structure erected. In 1936, membership passed the 1000 mark. On May 12, 1931, was organized the Young Co-operator's Club. In October 1932, the Co-operative Women's Guild was started. In 1932, Waldemar Niemela, manager since 1921, resigned and Arvo N. Rivers was appointed General Manager. In 1939, the first Children's Co-op Day Camp was held at Vose Park. In 1941, the Main Store was remodelled into a modern supermarket, the first in town to sell groceries on a self-service basis. In the same year / on October 30, a branch store was opened on Belmont Street in Worcester. In the fall of 1941, the United States entered World War II; A shortage of qualified employees began to cause difficulties. Rationing brought additional complications for both customers and employees. In 1946, the Co-op took another big step. A fire ruined a building next to the

Recd
6-4-4

Main Store. The Co-op bought the building, reconstructed and modernized it, and moved the Appliance and Hardware Department from the second floor of the Main Store to this new location. In 1947, a Furniture Department was established on the second floor of the Main Store. In August 1948, the Maynard Consumers Credit Union was opened for business for members of the Co-op. October 1948, a new Garage Building to house from 11 to 15 trucks was built. March 18, 1955, a completely renovated and remodelled Main Supermarket was opened. The alleyway between the Main Store and the Appliance Store was replaced by a corridor, with access from both Main Street and the rear parking lot. February 16, 1957 the Waltham Street Store was closed.

United Cooperative Society of Maynard.

A cooperative by its very nature is more than a business venture by a large group of people - it is also a cultural, social and educational institution. The cooperatives that we have been blessed with in Maynard since nearly the incorporation of the town all fall into this larger category. This paper is concerned with the United Cooperative Society of Maynard - which is still with us, though weakened by old age.

The writer of this paper is privileged to have three uncles and his mother on the original charter list of one hundred and eighty-seven in 1906, so takes pardonable pride in presenting this history.

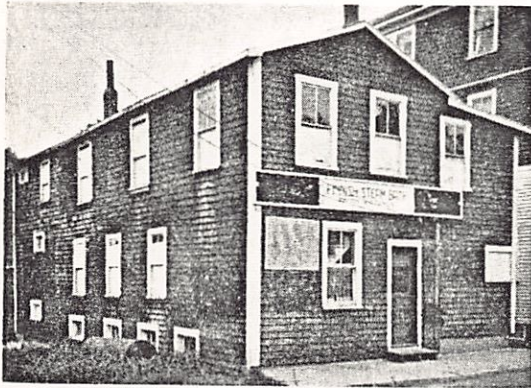
Our one and only entry out of the Maynard News is dated Dec. 29, 1905. It says 'Finns to start Coop - Subscribed for Already.' The 50th anniversary booklet in 1957 made it unnecessary to delve further into newspapers. We will read from this - which will bring us to that year.

The Story of the United Co-operative Society of Maynard

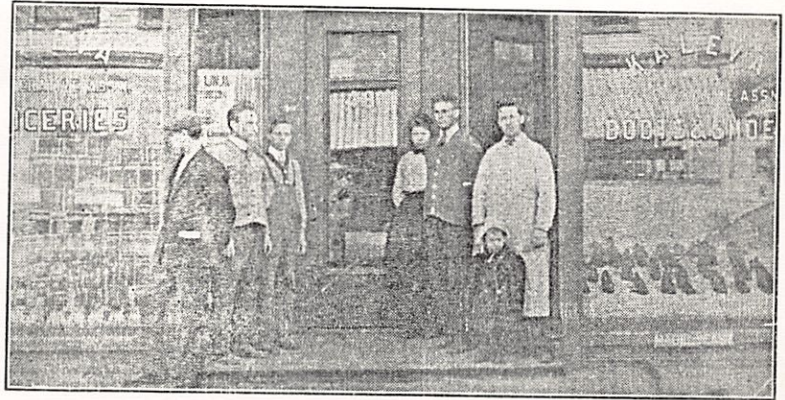
1907



1916



Finnish bath house, River Street.



Our first Co-op Store.

YEARS ago many a Finn in the old country was born in a sauna, or bath house. So, too, in a sense, was the United Co-operative Society of Maynard. On River Street in Maynard, there still stands the Finnish bath house in which in 1906 were held the first discussions which resulted in the organization of the Kaleva Co-operative Association, as the Society was first called, "Kaleva" being the ancient name of the Finnish people. The discussions led to a membership drive which succeeded in enlisting 187 members. Mostly weavers and other workers in the local woolen mill, they received small wages; yet they subscribed \$1,600 for the Co-op's initial capital.

Our first store opened its doors in January, 1907. The stock and fixtures of a private grocery store were purchased and set up in part of the building on Main Street which is now the main Co-op building. The first manager was Matti Heckala.

The first eight years were lean and uncertain. Membership grew slowly, from 187 to 315, and annual sales

fluctuated from \$33,000 to \$39,000. The slow growth was due in large part to a complete lack of business experience and to misconceptions about the function of the Co-op in the minds of some of the members. The idea that the association was a charitable agency to which an individual could go in time of distress, or a financial concern which would provide easy credit to all comers, placed a heavy burden upon the Co-op. Under-capitalization and many bad accounts resulting from credit sales caused frequent changes in managers in these early years.

Whatever the members lacked in business sense, however, they made up in loyalty and perseverance. A substantial part of the membership who regarded consumers' co-operation almost with religious zeal brought the organization through these trying years. These pioneers refused to acknowledge defeat; they sacrificed and worked, with the firm conviction that they were building a better society for future generations. They believed that the principle of selfish gain makes it possible for the few to own and enjoy the material resources

necessary for the good life in this world, while the many suffer and are denied access to these resources. They wanted to build a new type of economic order in which the doors to an abundant life are open for all who wish to enter. Basing their activity on the principles of mutual aid, democratic fellowship, and faith in men of good will, they were confident that through co-operative effort in the everyday world, men of all nationalities, races, and creeds could be united in neighborly service. These were the goals toward which the pioneer co-operators in Maynard were striving, and these goals have never been lost sight of in the history of the Society.

Recognizing that much educational work would have to be done before all men accepted these ideals, the Kaleva Co-op in 1911 became a member of the Eastern Finnish Co-operative Educational League.

A great step forward in the material well-being of the Co-op was taken in 1912, when the present Co-op building on Main Street was purchased on a time payment plan for

Our first delivery equipment: This was probably the horse about which there was considerable discussion at one of the early membership meetings. The question was: Should the manager take the horse to Vose's for a Sunday airing, or should he not? (On the left is Otto Fonsell, long-time employee and director; on the right, Waino Williams.)



\$16,000. This act well illustrates the courage and farsightedness of the pioneer members. Records show that the total assets before the purchase were \$10,138; indebtedness was \$7,118, and members' investment in the Co-op was only \$3,020. After the purchase, assets were \$25,739; indebtedness was \$20,406, and members' equity \$5,533. Thus liabilities were almost four times as great as members' equity, which made the purchase a daring undertaking, but one of the most significant in our history, for this building has served ever since as the center of our Co-op's activities.

The poor quality and high price of privately baked bread brought about the purchase in 1914 of property on Powder Mill Road, on which a combination bakery and salesroom was erected. Since then the Co-op has regularly baked its own "democrat"



Matti Hekkala,
first manager

rye bread — or "demo," as it is popularly called. Many a first generation co-operator, in explaining his children's interest in the Co-op, has said, "My boy and girl grew up on Co-op bread."

The co-operative movement was making headway in other areas of the country also. In 1915 the Co-operative League of the United States was established, with the Maynard Co-op as one of its charter members.

Following its policy of expanding services to meet the needs of its members, the Co-op in 1916 added a meat department to the Main Store and started a restaurant on the second floor of the Co-op building. During its peak years the restaurant served as many as 250 people a day. Not only was the food good, but eating together provided the young co-operators an opportunity for lively discussion on how to remedy the ills of the world.

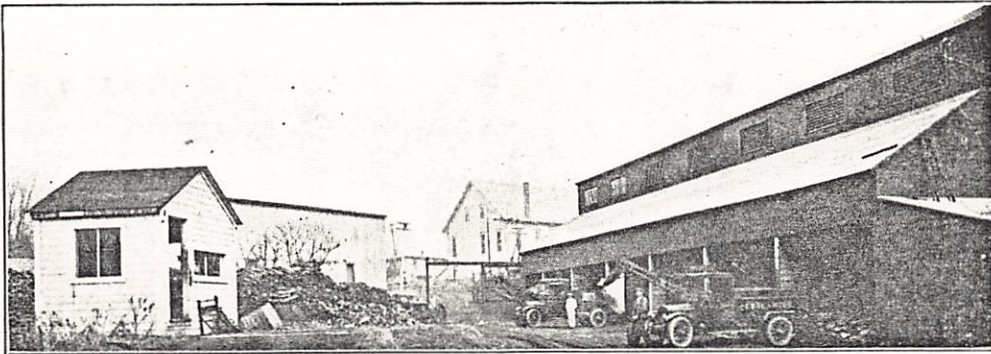


Interior of the
first store,
1907.

1917



1926



Co-op Coal Yard, 1925.

CONSUMER dissatisfaction over abuses in milk processing and distribution by private dealers had resulted in 1914 in the establishment of the Maynard Co-operative Milk Association. In 1917 this organization by a majority vote decided to become a part of the Kaleva Co-operative; thus our important Dairy Department came into being, located originally on the Powder Mill Road property. Forty-two members of the Milk Association refused to follow the majority and started a rival co-operative, the First National Co-operative Association, which continued until 1941.

In their idealistic enthusiasm, six of the leading Finnish co-operatives in Massachusetts (Maynard, Fitchburg, Quincy, Norwood, Gardner, and Worcester) pooled their capital and properties in 1919 to create the so-called "Million-Dollar Co-operative." Incorporating under the name of the United Co-operative Society of New England, they set up a general office in Boston. This move caused the old familiar name of the Kaleva Co-operative Association to be discarded. But the Million Dollar Co-operative experiment was doomed to fail. The individual co-ops had not learned to co-operate with each other. Friction arose between the larger and smaller societies, as well as factional quarrels over political issues. When the sudden decline in prices following the post-World War I inflation inflicted severe losses, the larger societies forced the liquidation of the joint co-operative in 1921.



Waldemar Niemela,
manager, 1916-1918,
1921-1932.

After the dissolution of the Million Dollar Co-operative, the Maynard society was re-incorporated under its present name of United Co-operative Society of Maynard. Since then expansion and improvement have been continuous.

In 1921 the Bakery was moved from Powder Mill Road to the rear of the Main Store; a new oven and machinery were installed.

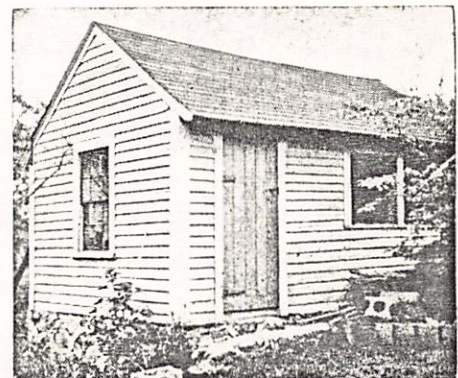
In 1923 a nation-wide strike of anthracite coal miners intensified unsatisfactory fuel supply conditions in Maynard. Discrimination in distribution and arbitrary pricing by private dealers led the Co-op to establish its own coal yard. Land was bought at a railroad siding off Summer Street; a new siding and coal storage warehouse were constructed.

Remaining half of original milk house
of Co-operative Milk Association.

From then on, the Co-op has provided its customers with the best grade coal, and its prices have been a yardstick for others to follow.

Annual sales volume was climbing rapidly — by 1924 the Co-op had reached sales of \$340,000. It had outgrown its quarters and a shortage of storage space was being felt, so the membership voted to construct a large annex to the Main Store building. The new building was completed in 1925 at a cost of \$35,000. The Dairy was moved to part of the new building, and new pasteurizing equipment enabled the Co-op to deliver the first pasteurized milk in town. The new structure also housed a repair garage for our growing fleet of trucks and furnished warehouse space.

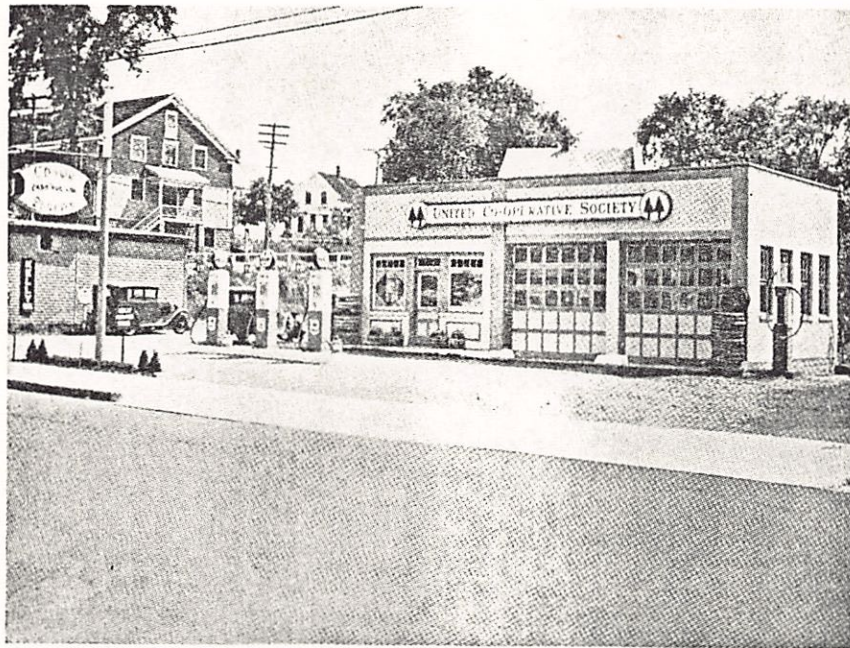
In order to provide greater convenience for many of its members, the Co-op in 1926 purchased a small grocery store building (with its stock of merchandise) on the corner of Parker and Waltham Streets. This became the Co-op Branch Store.



1927



1936



Co-op Gas Station, 1935. To the left can be seen the original Branch Store building.

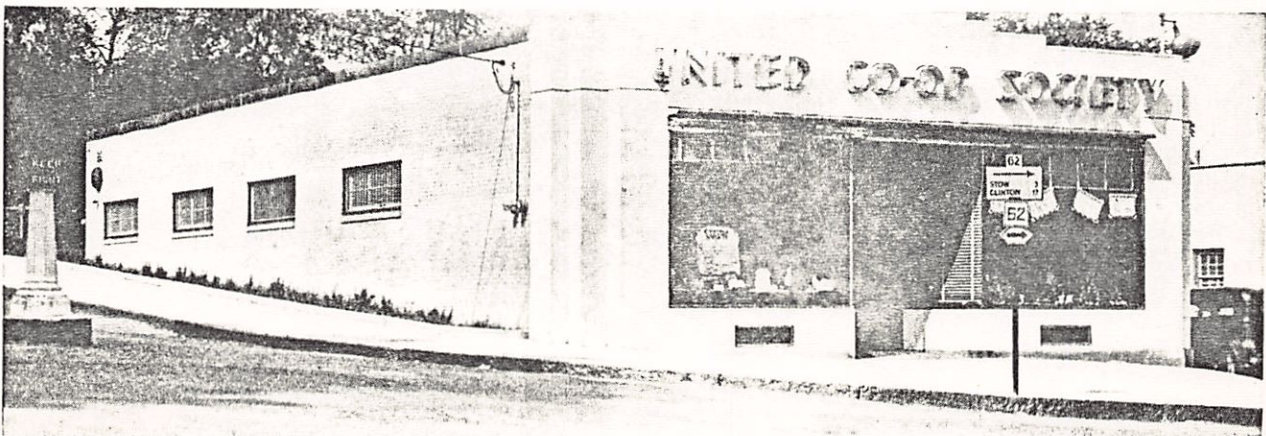
RETAIL co-operatives need the services of a co-operative wholesale. In 1928 the Maynard Co-op became one of the charter members of the Eastern Co-operative Wholesale, Inc., the establishment of which was a great step forward for the co-operative movement in the East.

With the passing of time, the needs of the members of the Co-op have changed; some departments have been

discontinued, others added. The restaurant on the second floor of the Main Store building was closed in February, 1930. In 1931 the Co-op started a new service for its farmer members. Grain, feeds, fertilizers, and other farm supplies were made available in a new warehouse built on the end of the coal sheds. The growing demand for fuel oil led to the purchase of a truck, in 1933, for the

distribution of petroleum products. Ice delivery service was begun in the spring of 1934. In the same year land on the corner of Parker and Waltham Streets was purchased (including the land on which the Branch Store was located), and a Gasoline Service Station was erected. Storage facilities for fuel and range oil were provided by the installation of three 10,000-gallon tanks at the coal yard.

Co-op Branch Store, 1936.



In order to provide better service for more people, the Main Store was remodelled in 1935; new display cases were installed in the meat, produce, and bakery departments, and a new fish department was started. The old Branch Store building was torn down and a new completely modern structure was erected in 1936 at a cost of \$20,000. The new store was provided with the latest equipment for the sale of groceries, meats, produce, and baked goods, as well as housing a soda fountain and luncheonette. Over 3000 persons visited the store on opening day, April 15. Dedication ceremonies were held at the High School, with Dr. James P. Warbasse, President of the Co-operative League of the United States, as principal speaker. In 1936 our membership passed the 1000 mark.

Not only was the Co-op growing commercially in its third decade, but

its cultural and community activity was expanding also. On May 12, 1931, was organized the Young Co-operators' Club, a youth organization which supplied many of the Society's leaders in later years. In October, 1932, the Co-operative Women's Guild was started. Besides conducting cooking schools and food demonstrations, arranging classes in other home-making arts, and serving refreshments at co-operative entertainments, the Guild assisted the Society in its educational and promotional work.

In 1932, to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Waldemar Niemela, the Board of Directors appointed Arvo N. Rivers as General Manager. Born in Finland, Mr. Rivers came to this country in 1913 at the age of 17. After attending Työväen-Opisto, a Finnish college at Duluth, Minnesota, where he studied business administration, economics, and sociology, Mr. Rivers worked in the chemi-

cal department of a mining company. Then he was offered a job as bookkeeper by the newly organized Rock, Michigan, Co-op. Already interested in co-operative ideals, Mr. Rivers got a leave of absence from the mining company to try his skill at practical co-operation, and he has stayed with it ever since. He rose to be General Manager of the Rock Co-op. His 16½ years' experience there, in a business that sold goods ranging from groceries to tractors and marketed poultry and dairy products, and forest products by the thousands of carloads, made him well qualified to take charge of the multiple-business Maynard Co-op. In June of this year he will have completed 25 years of service here. The progress of the United Co-operative Society of Maynard during the last quarter-century has been due in no small measure to the leadership of Mr. Rivers, who has shown himself to be a truly dedicated co-operator.

Main Store front, 1935.



1937



1946



Main Store front, 1941.

IN the summer of 1939 the first Children's Co-op Day Camp was held at Vose Park. Here children from the ages of eight to fifteen were given an opportunity to enjoy swimming, games, nature study, music, and handicrafts, and to learn the ABC's of consumers' co-operation.

In 1941 the Co-op showed again that it was a pioneering organization. The Main Store was remodelled into a modern supermarket, the first in town to sell groceries on a self-service basis.

In the same year a group of co-operatively minded residents of Worcester appealed to the Maynard Co-op to establish a branch in that city. Worcester had been without a co-op since the dissolution of the Million Dollar Co-operative. They promised a certain amount of capital and their patronage. Mindful of the Rochdale principle of constant expansion, the membership voted to go ahead. The Worcester Store was opened for business in rented quarters on Belmont Street on October 30, 1941.

In the fall of 1941 the United States entered World War II. A shortage of qualified employees because of military service and defense work began to cause difficulties. Shortages in goods also created problems. In 1943 it was decided to discontinue the practice of accepting telephone orders for groceries. Rationing brought additional complications for both customers and employees. Attempts to distribute goods in short supply (especially butter and meats) on a fair basis aroused occasional hard

feelings. At the annual meeting in 1943 the Board of Directors was given a difficult dual assignment — to do its best to increase sales, but at the same time to be careful not to disregard the welfare of old members in acquiring new customers.

With a growing membership in Worcester, it seemed advisable to hold a special membership meeting there at annual meeting time. This practice was begun in 1944. By 1944 it was apparent also that waiting until the annual meeting to nominate candidates for the Board, with no advance preparation in gaining the consent of possible candidates or in evaluating their qualifications, was not the wisest method. So the Board appointed a Nominating Committee to prepare a slate of candidates to be presented to

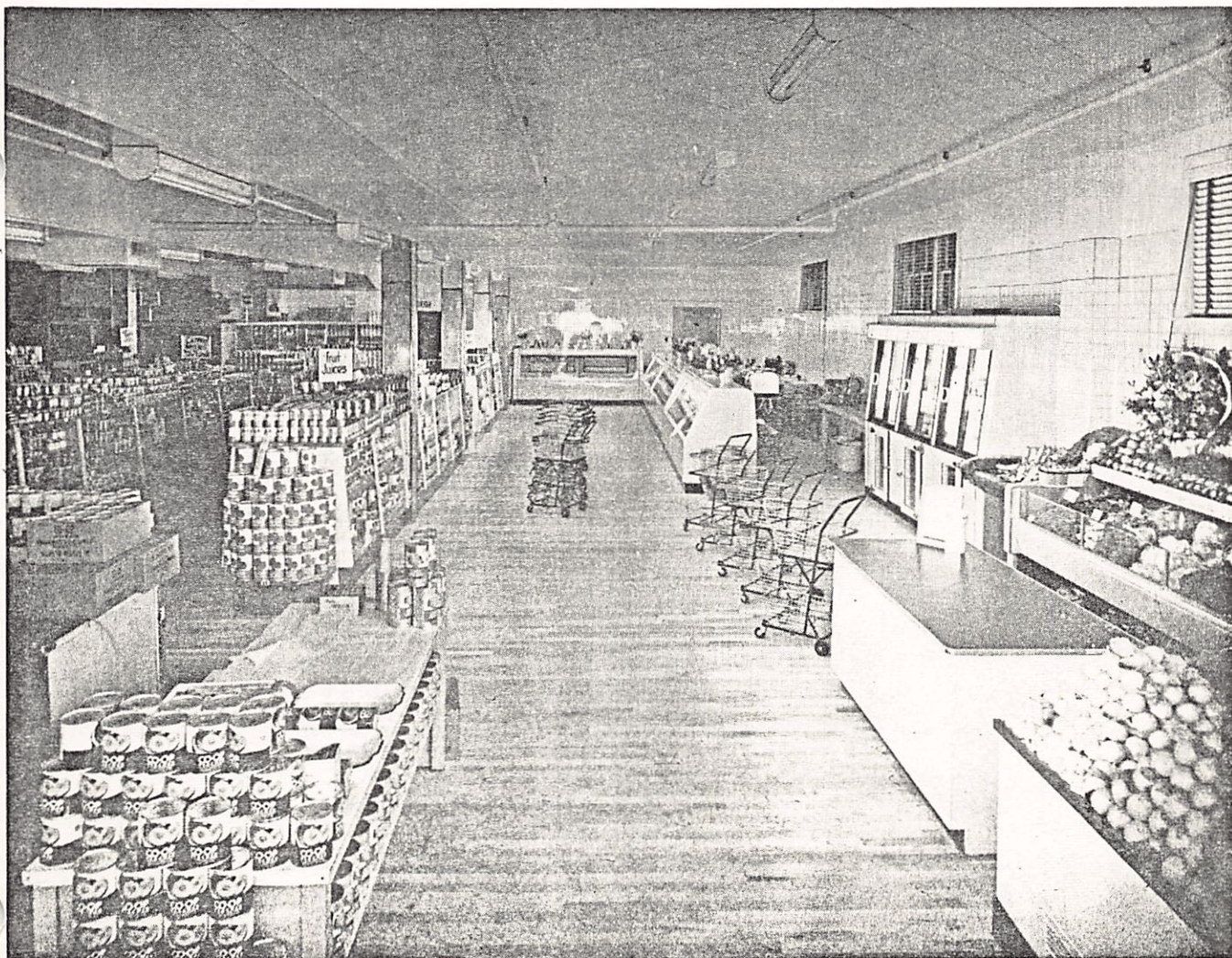
the annual meeting in 1945. This procedure met the approval of the membership and was continued until 1948, when the semi-annual membership meeting itself began to select such a Nominating Committee.

In 1946 the Co-op took another big step forward. A fire ruined a building next to the Main Store. The Co-op bought the building, reconstructed and modernized it, and moved the Appliance and Hardware Department from the second floor of the Main Store building to this new location. There was a shortage of many of the major lines of appliances and the move was costly, but the Society had confidence. That this confidence was well-placed is seen in the fact that this department has developed into

one of our most successful undertakings.

Our total annual sales volume passed the one million dollar mark for the first time in 1946. The organization moved ahead in other ways, too, in 1946. A comprehensive written personnel policy was adopted — one of the first such policies to be found among co-ops in the country. A group insurance plan for employees was started, providing life insurance, accident and sickness benefits, and hospitalization and surgery benefits, with the Co-op and the employee each paying half the cost. And in keeping with its interest in the welfare of its customers, the Co-op established the requirement of a periodic medical examination of each employee in a department where food is handled.

Main Store interior, right wing, 1941.



1947



1951

THE Appliance and Hardware Department having vacated the second floor of the Main Store building, a new Furniture Department was established there in the fall of 1947.

We took due note of having reached the mature age of 40 by holding a two-day anniversary celebration at Vose Park on June 7 and 8, 1947.

By this time we had decided that it was important to make a real effort to interest our English-speaking members in coming to our membership meetings. Although the Finnish members had taken the most active part in the affairs of the Co-op from the beginning, there were by now more non-Finnish than Finnish members. Attempts to conduct meetings in two languages had proved cumbersome. In 1947, therefore, was instituted the plan of holding a special membership meeting in Maynard for the English-speaking members (in addition to the meeting for Worcester members) prior to the annual meeting, the same agenda being followed in all three meetings. Thus we tried to insure all possible opportunity for democratic control of the Co-op.

Our fifth decade gave indications that the Co-op was far from slowing down. Assistance was given in the establishment of the Maynard Consumers Credit Union for members of the Co-op; it opened for business in August of 1948. At the end of that year it had 155 members; its assets



Entrance to Maynard Consumers Credit Union office. Left to right: Norman Hannon, Secretary; Mrs. Martha Weckstrom, Bookkeeper and Teller; Herbert Ruotsala, Treasurer; Charles M. Lerer, President.

Garage for our fleet of trucks, completed in October, 1948.



were \$27,626. As of November, 1956, it had 932 members, and its assets were \$344,285.

A handsome new garage building to house from 11 to 15 trucks and provide warehouse space for farm and building supplies was completed in October, 1948.

In our aim to create the best possible working conditions for our employees, we instituted a five-day work week (at no loss in pay, of course) in 1948. And in the same



One of our oil delivery trucks.



"Fill 'er up with Co-op!"

year, the Co-op Women's Guild, which had become dormant during the war years, was revived in an English-speaking form.

Our fuel oil delivery department had increased its sales to such an extent by 1949 that it was necessary in February to add two 10,000-gallon storage tanks to the three already located on our property on Euclid Avenue. In October we installed new homogenizing equipment in our Dairy to satisfy the demand for homogenized milk. We continued, of course, to process our regular pasteurized milk as well. For the Dairy we also bought a clarifier, which removes from milk all foreign matter (except bacteria, which are removed by the pasteurizing process itself).

In the non-commercial area of our activities, we held our Children's Co-op Day Camp again in 1949, for the first time since the war.

In 1950 the keynote was self-service. We introduced self-service meat cases in our Main Store (another "first" in Maynard) and self-service dairy and frozen foods cases. The produce department was also put on a partially self-service basis.

The Waltham Street Store was completely remodelled. The luncheonette and soda fountain were discontinued

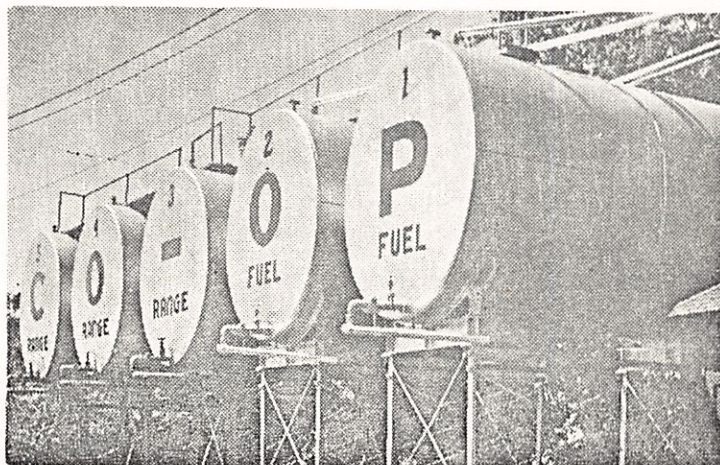
because they had become losing operations. The re-opening of the store on April 20, 1950, revealed a modern self-service market with entirely new equipment, and with home remedies and beauty aids in addition to food products. (Later by request of some of our members, a service meat counter was re-established.)

In the same year the Dairy began to use the square bottles that are easier to fit into a refrigerator; the Bakery started pre-packaging goods for self-service and once again began to bake our own white bread, which

had been discontinued during the war years because of a shortage of bakers.

In 1951 came an important development in our Co-op Wholesale. For five years the New England co-ops had been working toward establishing an autonomous wholesale in place of the existing Eastern Co-operative Wholesale, Inc., which served a much larger area. The change-over was made in September, 1951, and the new organization, New England Co-operatives, Inc., has taken great strides forward in the years that have followed.

Oil storage tanks at Euclid Avenue.



1952



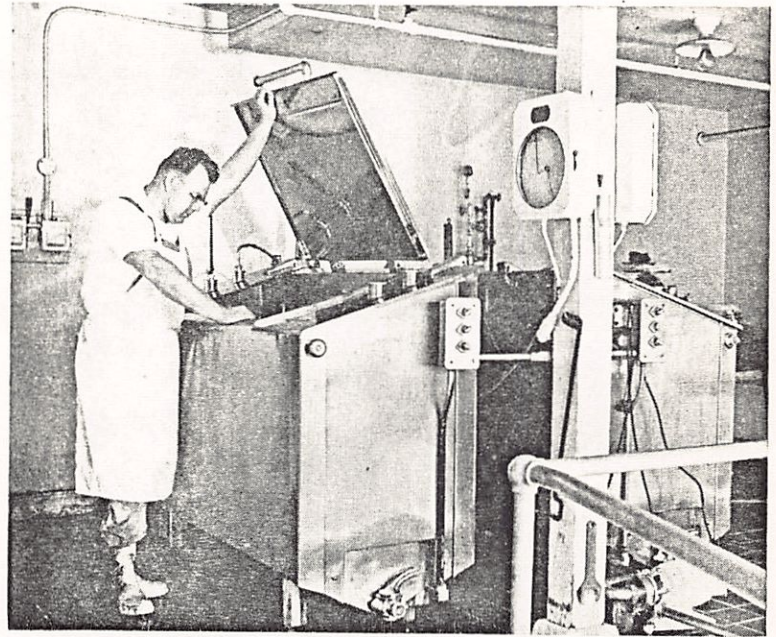
1957

THE aim of the Co-op has constantly been to provide more and better service for more people. In keeping with this aim, we started a fuel oil delivery service in Worcester in 1952. At our Gas Station we made arrangements to sell gas under the Co-op label at 2¢ a gallon less than the so-called "regular" gas. (Today our Co-op gas pump accounts for 60% of all gas sales.) We acted to provide convenient parking space for our Main Store customers by buying a four-tenement house and land on River Street behind the Appliance Store. The house was razed and the lot levelled, and thus space was made available for 30 cars. In the spring of 1953 the area was hot-topped and well marked and lighted.

In the 1953 revision of our By-Laws the Nominating Committee plan was formalized. To insure proper democratic control, the Nominating Committee is now composed of eight members, elected as follows: three members elected by the English-speaking annual meeting (two from the general membership and one from the employees), three members elected by the Finnish meeting (two from the general membership and one from the

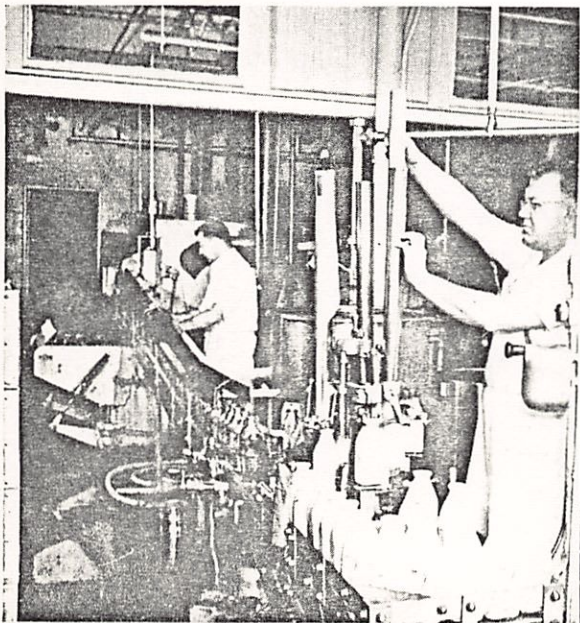
employees), and two members elected by the Board of Directors from its members. There is provision also for nomination by petition. The Worcester members nominate their candidates for the Board and for the Worcester

Store Committee. At the same time the ratio of Board members from the Maynard and Worcester areas was formally established, partially according to the ratio of members in the two areas.

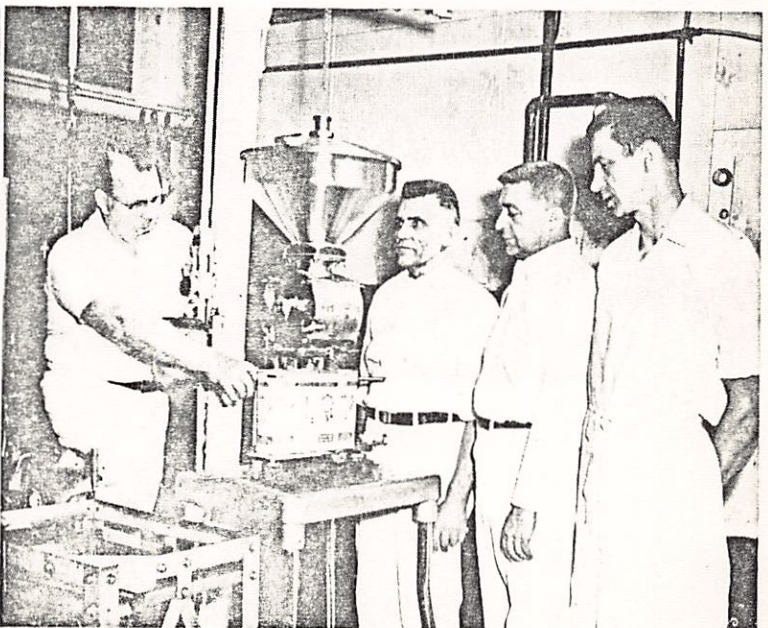


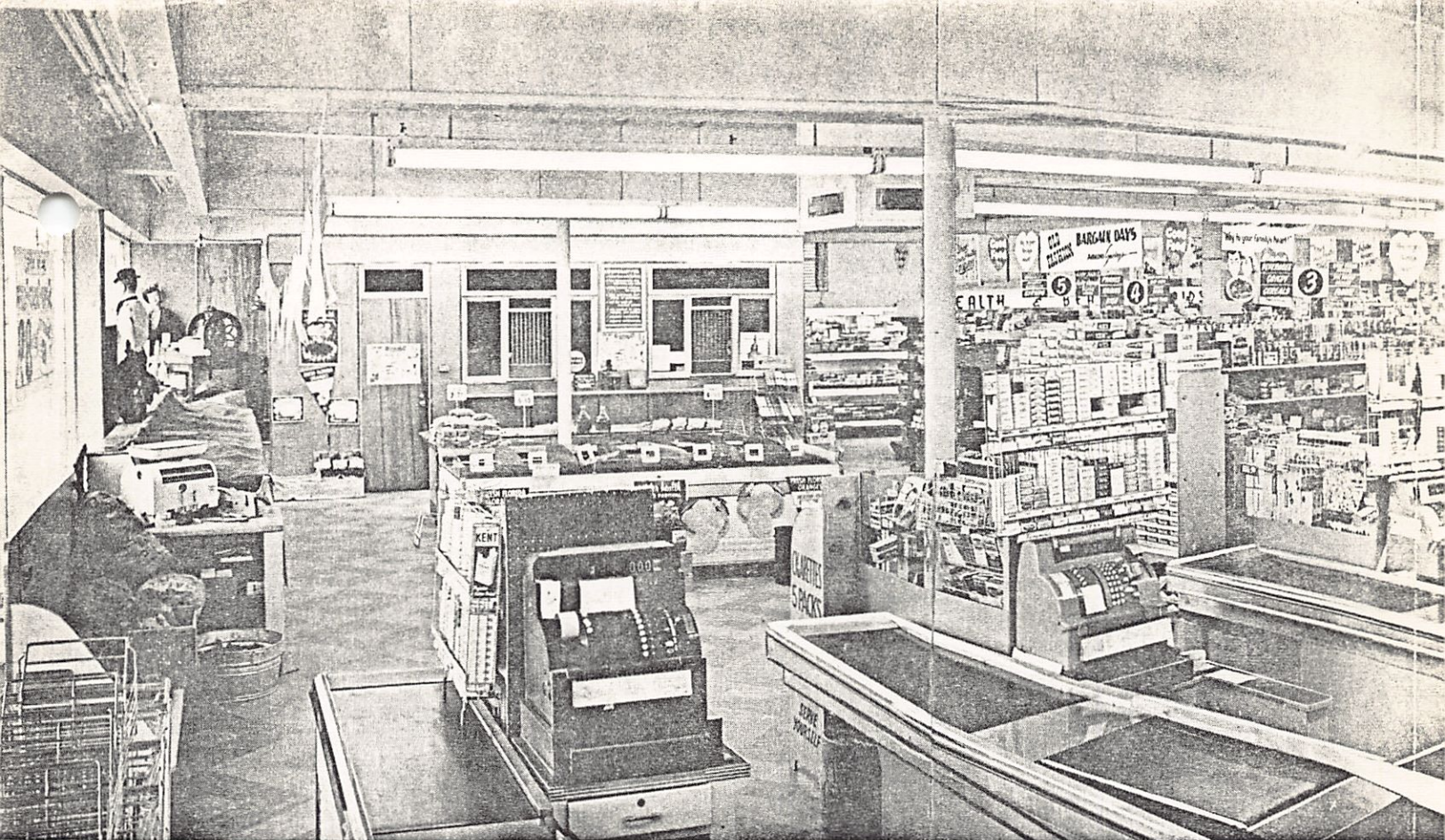
Milk pasteurizing equipment in Dairy.

Bottle washer, conveyor, filler and capper.



Dairy crew watching operation of new paper carton filler.





Our present Supermarket.

In 1954 the Co-op added a few new services. Milkmen began to deliver other dairy products besides milk to the homes of customers. The Bakery started to produce Triple-Rich bread according to the formula of Professor McCoy of Cornell University. Suggestion boxes were placed in our markets, and a number of good suggestions were acted upon — for example,

new beige and green uniforms were supplied to our women employees, and a voluntary payroll deduction plan for the purchase of shares by employees was instituted.

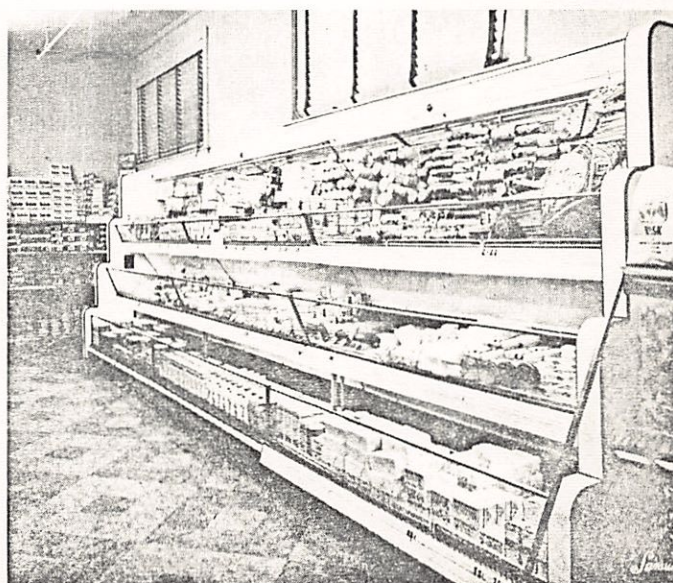
The new parking lot behind the Main Street buildings was in constant use from the beginning. Various plans were considered for making it

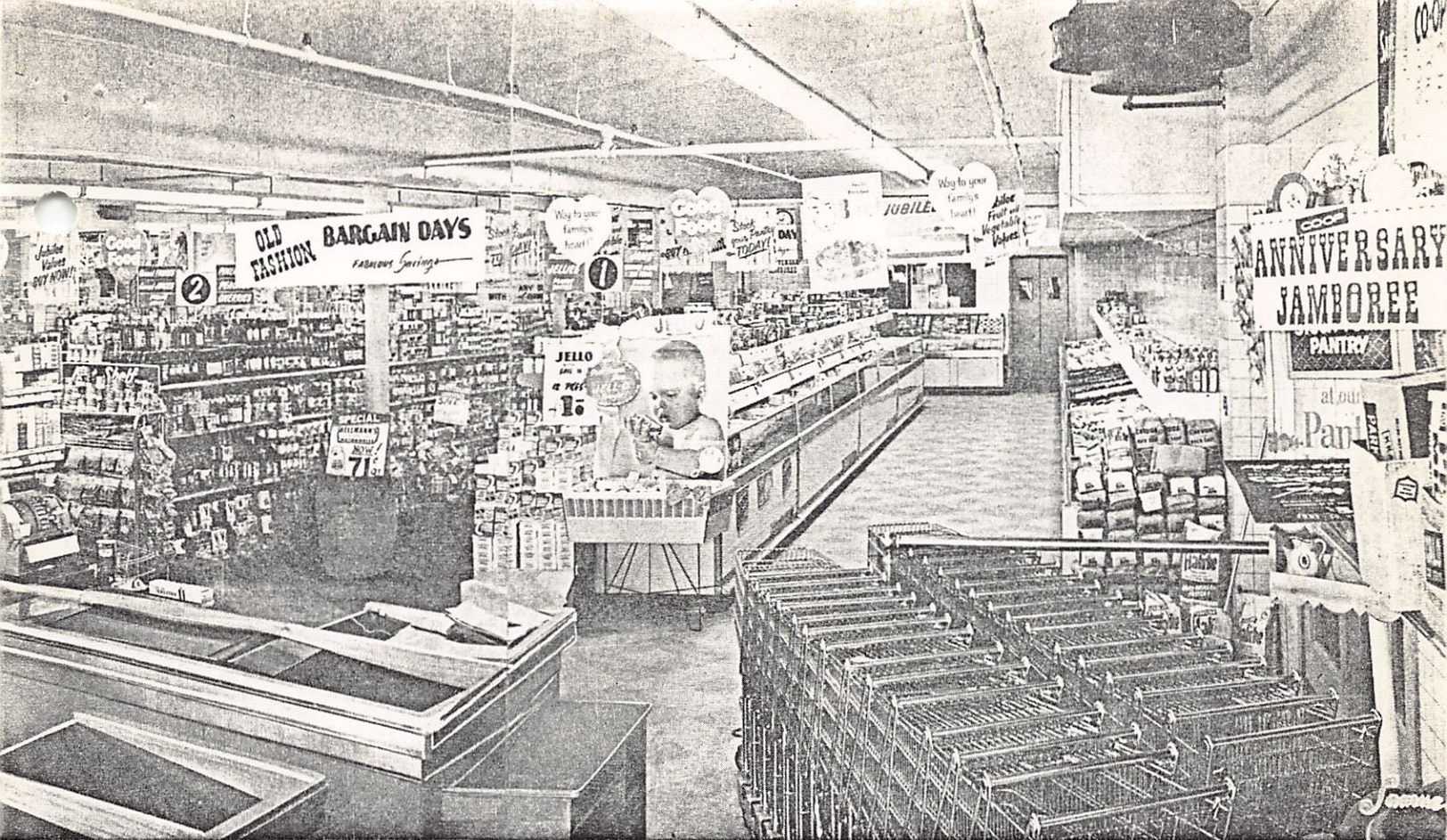
more convenient for our customers to get to the stores from the parking lot. These plans soon led to a complete renovation of the Main Store. The remodelled Main Supermarket was formally opened on March 18, 1955. There were extensive changes. The alleyway between the Main Store and the Appliance Store was replaced by a handsome corridor, with access from

Rear section of Supermarket.



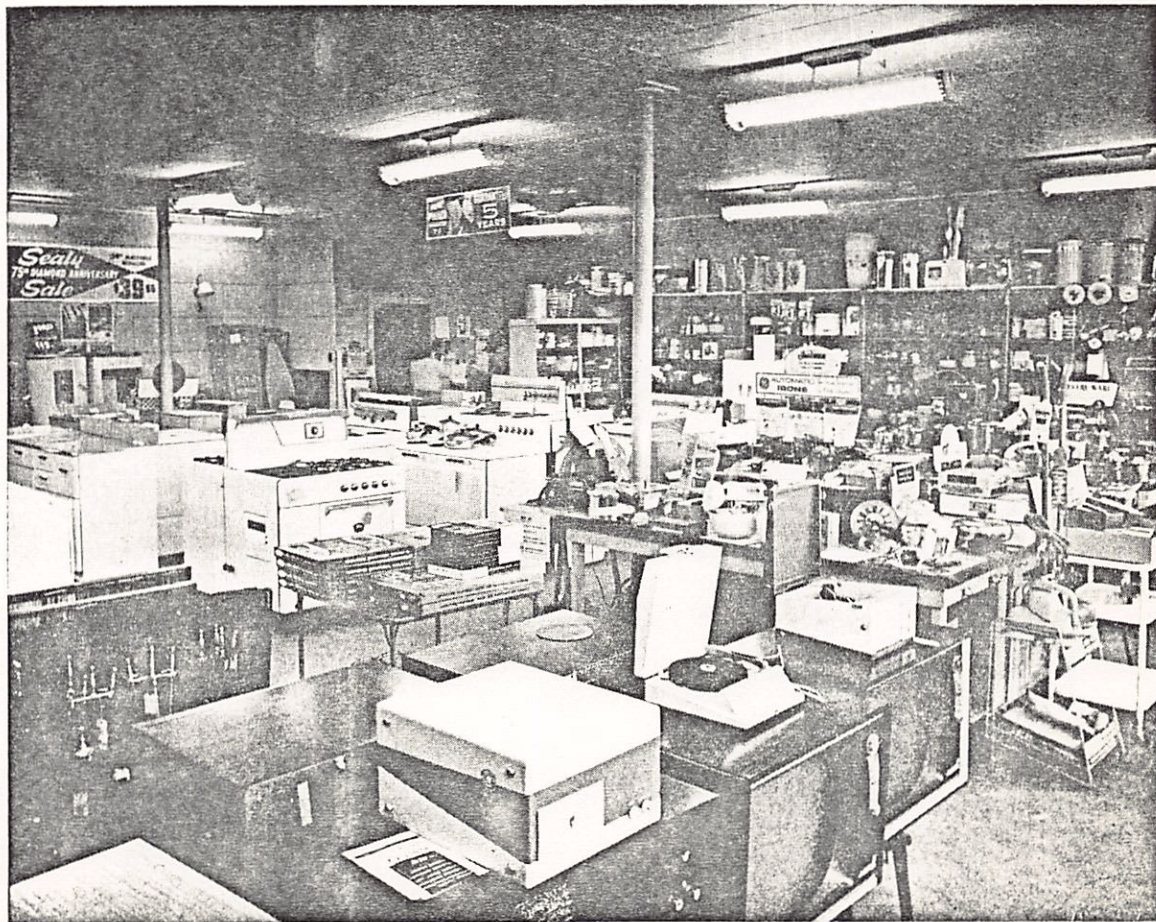
Dairy case in Supermarket.

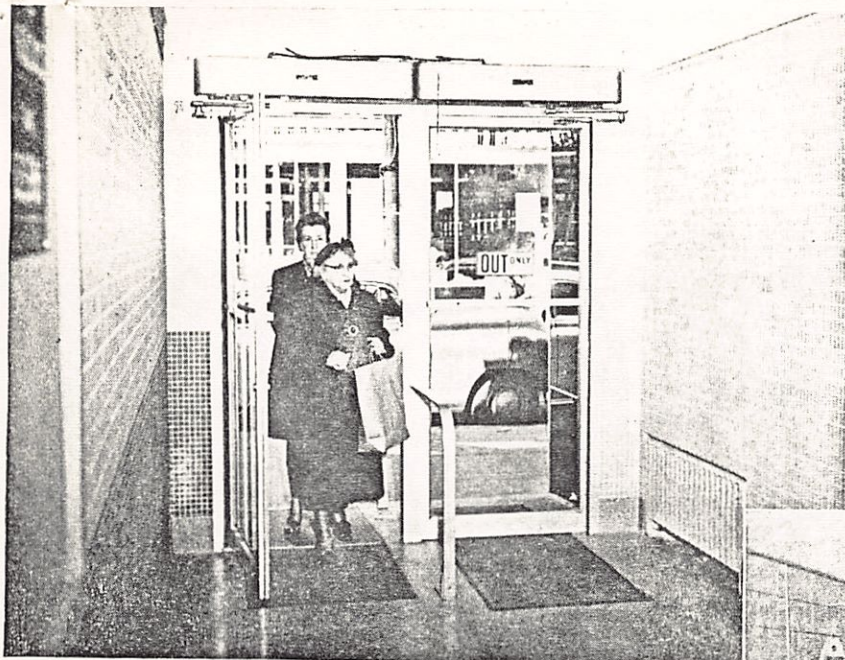




arket on Main Street.

Our present Appliance Store.



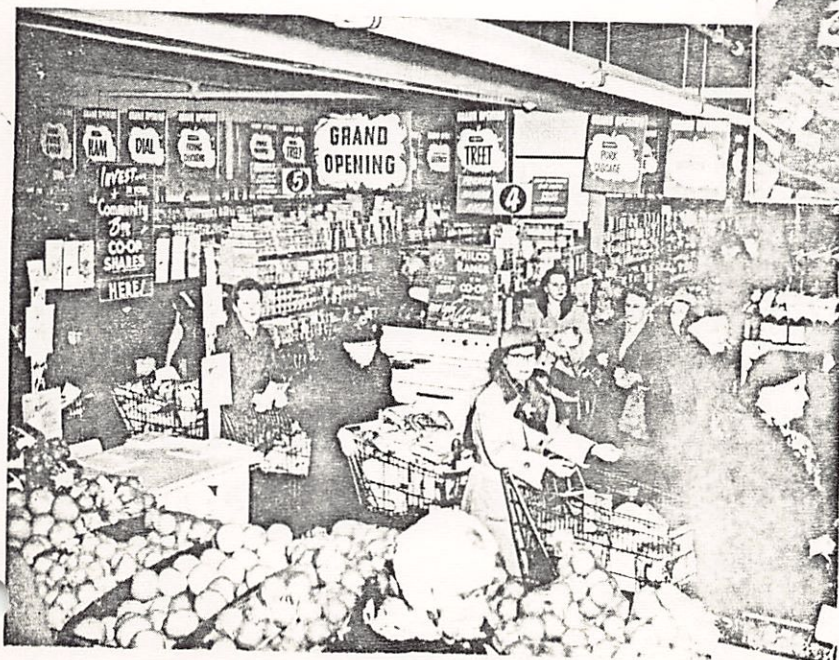


Easy entrance to our Supermarket and Appliance Store through new Magic Carpet doors.

both Main Street and the parking lot; entrances to both stores were provided from the corridor. Magic Carpet doors (the first in Maynard) were installed at both ends of the corridor. New adjustable shelving, new frozen foods cases, additional self-service meat cases, new automatic check-out counters, new floor covering, a new arrangement in layout — all of these made our Main Supermarket unquestionably the most modern, best-equipped food store in the area. The



Self-service meat cases, Supermarket.



Opening day at remodelled Supermarket, March 18, 1955.

renovation was financed (as our earlier renovations had been) largely by long-term loans from our loyal members, some of the original members of the Co-op among them.

In other ways, too, we continued to progress in 1955. New plastic-coated paper milk containers were introduced for store sales of milk. An incentive-pay plan was put into operation, involving about two-thirds of our employees. A new adult education and recreation program was started, with classes in painting and square dancing.

Our Worcester Store, almost from its beginning, proved too small and inefficient for our needs. More space was soon rented, but it was still inadequate. At the request of the membership, the Board, the Worcester Store Committee, and the General Manager worked diligently for some years to try to find a way to improve the situation. This work was climaxed by our acquiring the services of a professional market analyst from the Peo-

ple's Development Company (affiliated with the Co-op League of U. S. A.) in 1955. The comprehensive report from the analyst indicated that there were good possibilities for the expansion of consumers' co-operation in Worcester through the establishment of a supermarket in any one of several suggested localities. Some preliminary work was done to get support from trade unions and church groups in Worcester; pledges for financial support were obtained. When the motion for establishing a new Co-op supermarket in Worcester was presented for final action at the membership meetings of 1956, however, it was defeated. The majority were not ready for such a vast project. Thus we still face the problem of what to do about the unsatisfactory Worcester situation. Undoubtedly a solution will be found that will work for the advantage of the Co-op as a whole.

During the last year there was much discussion also about the Waltham Street Store. With the renova-

tion of the Main Supermarket, it seemed that we no longer needed two food stores in Maynard. Consequently the Waltham Street Store was closed on February 16, 1957. Plans are being formulated for the best use to be made of our property at that location.

In 1956 the membership voted to conduct the annual and semi-annual meetings henceforth in English, preceded by a special membership meeting in Finnish, thus reversing the plan that had been followed since 1947. This is clear and official recognition of a fact which has been increasingly apparent for many years, that the Co-op started by Finnish immigrants no longer is solely dependent for its continuance upon people of one national origin. It has succeeded in becoming, in practice as well as in theory, an organization for all consumers. One thing, nonetheless, is still as true as ever — the members of the Co-op are its backbone, their welfare the very reason for its existence.



Worcester Store Committee, 1957. Left to right, standing: Francis Wheeler; John Martilla, Vice-Chairman; Eero Osterlund, Secretary; Lauri Bishop; Hugo Francis. Seated: Reino Nelson, Chairman; Paul Husted.

Our Worcester Store on Belmont Street.





Cultural and Educational Activities



FROM the beginning the founders of the Co-op recognized the need for educational work to interest people in the organization and to increase their understanding of co-operative principles. To them the Co-op was not simply a business; it was the manifestation of a social philosophy, a way of life. Its advantages must be made known to as many as possible.

Frequently in the early days socials were arranged at Parker Street Hall, with the assistance of the Finnish Workingmen's Society. A speaker was usually part of the evening's program. On one such occasion the speaker was Wilho Bowman, then one of the editors of the Finnish daily newspaper, the *Raivaaja*. After an especially inspiring talk about the co-operative movement, Mr. Bowman called for a hat. Then pointing at one of the young ladies in the audience, he commanded, "Young lady, you take this hat and pass it around! We'll collect five dollars for a share from everyone who wants to be a part of this co-operative movement! And to start us off right," he continued, reaching into his own pocket, "here's my five dollars!" The young lady made her way around the audience, signing

up members and collecting five dollar bills. So eloquent was the speaker that everyone wanted to follow his example.

Shares were sold by the early members from house to house also, with an explanation at each stop of what the Co-op was all about. Full of enthusiasm for the new venture, the pioneer members thought nothing of spending their evenings doing voluntary work for the Co-op, and their efforts brought results.

In later years the cultural and educational work of the Co-op has been carried on through various subsidiary groups under the sponsorship of the organization. By the 1930's a new generation of young co-operators had come into being. During the depression years, when the co-operatives became a symbol of hope for the unemployed and the idealist, many of the young people of Maynard directed their interest toward the Young Co-operators' Club, organized on May 12, 1931. Similar clubs were formed in other communities where co-ops existed.

The purposes of the club were educational and recreational. The club

sought to enlighten its members and other young people in the community by promoting an understanding of the principles of consumers' co-operation and of current events in general. It arranged forums, lectures, consumers' surveys. It sent delegates to the annual Co-operative Summer Institute at Brookwood College and Massachusetts State College at Amherst. It sponsored wholesome and inexpensive recreational activities at a time when money for recreation was scarce. These included winter sports festivals, summer outings and picnics, card parties and dances. A glee club was organized, and dramatic competitions among the various co-operative clubs were held.

On October 9, 1932, official delegates from five co-operative youth clubs along with other co-operators met at Fitchburg and organized the Co-operative Youth League of Massachusetts. At the second convention in 1933 the name was changed to the Massachusetts League of Co-operative Clubs. At the peak of its activity this League had among its members Co-operative Clubs in Ashby, Fitchburg, Hubbardston, Maynard, Milford (N. H.), Quincy, Townsend,

Co-operative Women's Guild, 1933.





Some members of Women's Guild, 1957.
 Standing, left to right: Mrs. Paul Heikkila, Miss Marion Jones, Miss Mildred Jones, Mrs. Arvo N. Rivers, Mrs. Rodney Fowler, Mrs. Charles Syrjanen, Mrs. Frank Grudinski, Mrs. Pauline Saarinen, Miss Jennie Zach. Seated, left to right: Miss Cecelia O'Toole, Secretary; Mrs. Waino Parker, Vice-President; Miss Marion Ledgard, President; Mrs. Lauri Wick, Treasurer; Mrs. George Ojalehto, Sunshine Committee.

Westminster, and Winchendon. The activities of the Maynard club and of the League were terminated by World War II, and no organization of young co-operators exists at present in Maynard or in any of the other New England co-ops. That the clubs did valuable work, however, is seen in the fact that much of the present leadership in New England co-ops comes from the young people who were among their members in the 1930's.

According to an old saying, "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." It is certainly true that the women members of the United Co-operative Society have made very significant contributions to the success of the Co-op in its educational and promotional program. The Co-op's first formal women's organization was the (Finnish) Co-op Women's Guild, started in October, 1932. The activities of this group were many. It carried on missionary work among the housewives in the principles of con-

sumers' co-operation. It arranged cooking schools, food demonstrations, and classes for the study of other homemaking arts. It spread commodity education among women, with particular emphasis on the quality and the system of grading of Co-op merchandise. It helped organize and conduct the Co-op Summer Camp for children. It provided recreational and social activities for its members. It prepared refreshments for all Co-op meetings, outings, and entertainments.

Frank Aaltonen in *Maynard Weavers* in 1941 made an observation about the Women's Guild that is as true today as it was then. He said: "The women control most of the family purchases and their is the 'power of the market basket.' It makes all the difference in the world where they buy The fate of the consumers' co-operative movement in America is in the hands of the women. Given the support of a large number of consumer conscious, socially minded women, the

movement will succeed in a big way and become a tremendous force for the good of the nation. Without such support its value will be relatively small. The women hold the key to the future of the consumers' co-operative movement."

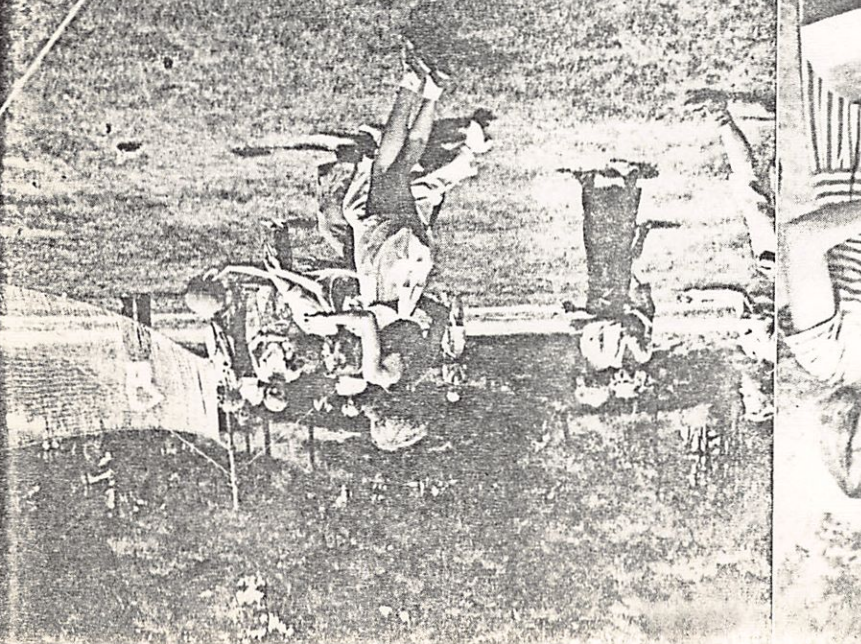
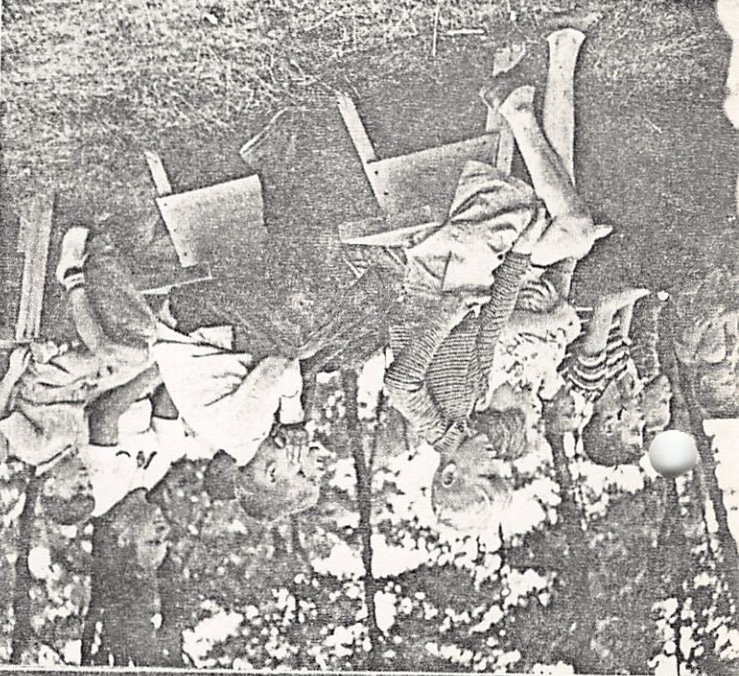
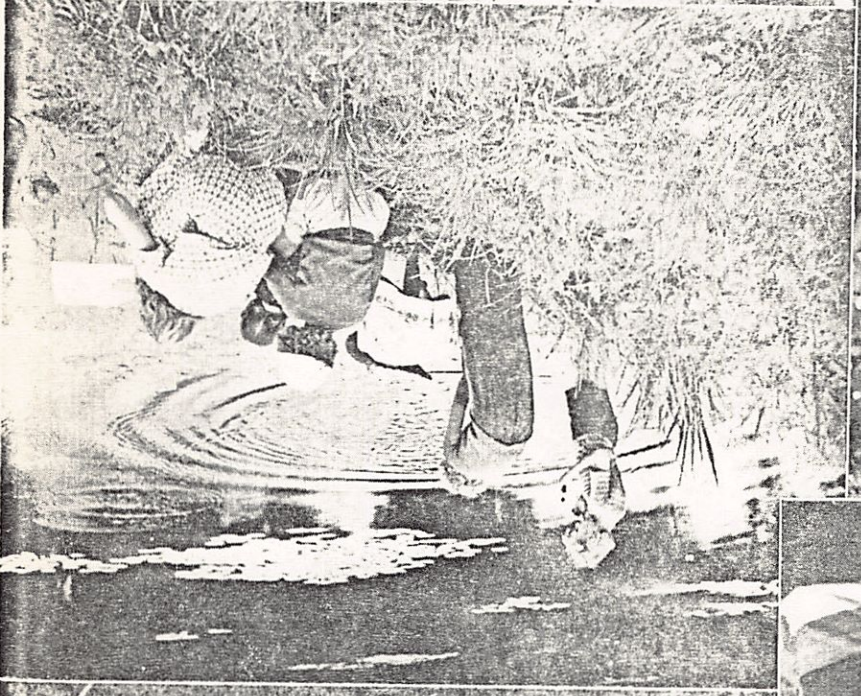
Today the Finnish Women's Guild has been replaced by an English Guild, organized in 1948. It is planning for future growth and increased activity. Through the Co-op Guild, the women in our Society can find fellowship and an outlet for their creative abilities. Through the Co-op Guild, women can bring to bear a direct influence on the economic and cultural life of the community and of the nation.

The Co-op has not neglected the welfare of the children of its members and of the community. For many years we have held an annual Children's Christmas Party, with entertainment, refreshments, and Santa Claus. Over 200 children and parents made the 1956 party a joyful occasion.

In the summer of 1939 the Educational Committee and the Women's Guild conducted a Children's Co-op Day Camp at Vose Park. More than 100 youngsters between the ages of eight and fifteen took part in the program of swimming, games, nature study, music, handicrafts, and instruction in the ABC's of consumers' co-operation. This venture was discontinued during the war years, but was



Democracy at work:
 a Co-op membership meeting.



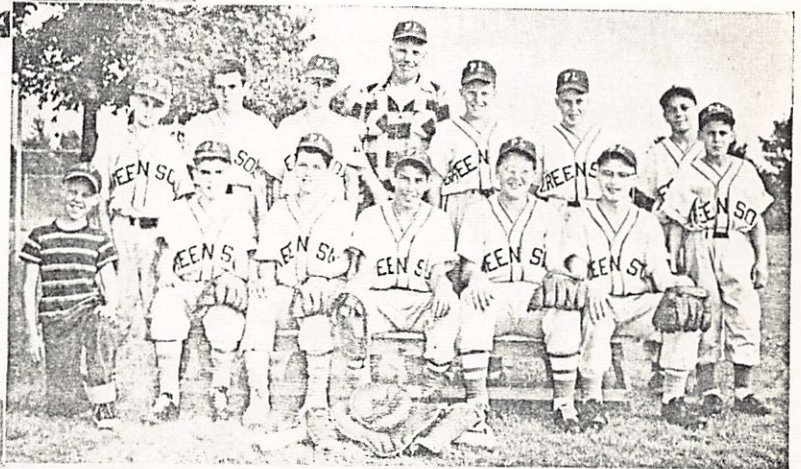
Left: Children happy and busy at various of our Co-op Summer Day Camps.

Right: Co-op art class, 1956.



Santa visits the Co-op Children's Christmas Party.

Baseball means co-operation, too:
Co-op team, Pony League.



Co-op sponsored Girl Scouts
(Brownies #7).

resumed in 1949 and continues to be part of our regular activities.

For several years the Co-op has awarded, each season, a trophy to be presented by the local high school to the most valuable member of its football team. We have also on occasion arranged poster contests in the local schools. At present we sponsor a Co-op baseball team in the Maynard Pony League, as well as Girl Scout Troop #7 (Brownies).

October is observed throughout the nation as Co-op month. For our part, we have regularly arranged special entertainments and socials during this month. Last year more than 100 co-operators enjoyed our Co-op month banquet, with Wallace Campbell, Director of the Washington, D. C., office of the Co-op League of U. S. A., as the after-dinner speaker, followed by dancing. A Finnish social was also held, with a musical program and Henry Puranen, Finnish Vice-Consul and manager of the *Raivaaja* as speaker.

Each year we have granted a number of scholarships to the Co-op Summer Institute, held most recently at Bard College, New York. The Institute offers a wonderful opportunity for learning and recreation. Everyone who has attended has returned with a greater understanding of co-operation and new enthusiasm to work for its advancement.

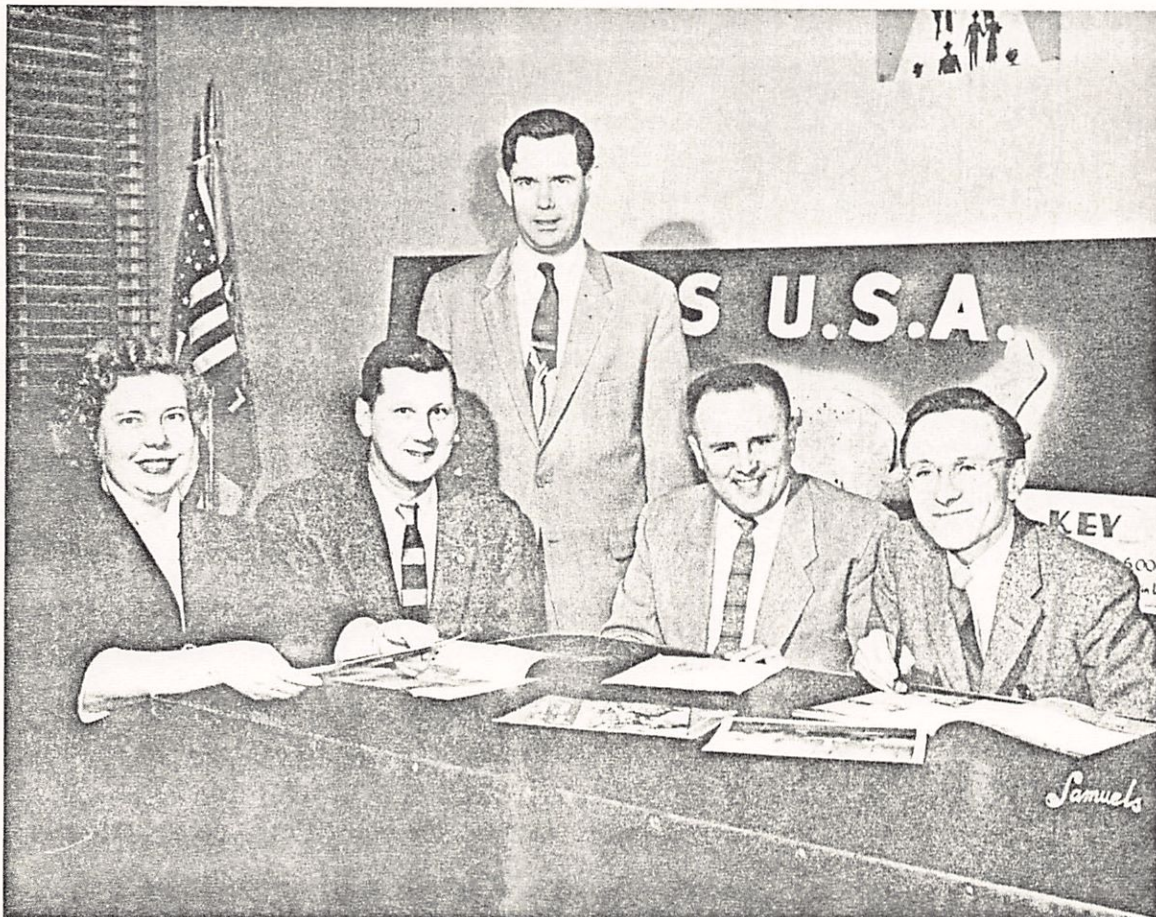
For the past two years we have sponsored classes in painting, under the direction of Mrs. Helen Yuchiewicz, and in square dancing, under the direction of Bob Treyz. Work from the art class has been exhibited in our stores.

The importance of constant education to a successful co-operative has been recognized in Maynard by official provision in the By-Laws for an Educational Committee, as it was originally called. The name of the committee was changed in 1948 to Public Relations Committee, better to suggest the broad scope of its work. It is composed of five members, elected by the

annual meetings from a slate of candidates prepared by the Nominating Committee. At each annual meeting, also, funds are voted for public relations and educational work for the coming year. At various periods the Co-op has employed part-time and full-time educational or public relations directors, each one of whom has contributed to the progress of the Society. From time to time, too, we have distributed our own news publications, the *Co-op Messenger* and the *Co-op News*, to keep our members informed about our activities and about the co-operative movement as a whole. The latter has appeared regularly now for several years, and has grown from four to eight pages.

Unquestionably one of the reasons for the continued growth and success of the Maynard Co-op has been its constant emphasis on the education of both its members and the general public on what the co-operative movement stands for and what benefits it has to offer to each individual and to the entire community.

Public Relations Committee, March, 1956, to March, 1957. Left to right: Mrs. Forrest Nelson, Secretary; Kenneth Jarvinen, Chairman; Rev. Robert K. Jones, Robert Ojalehto, Victor Yngve.





The Years to Come



THE members of the United Co-operative Society can look back with considerable satisfaction on what they have accomplished during the past half-century. The Co-op has grown from a small beginning among the Finnish residents of Maynard to an organization that now has almost 3,000 members of many national backgrounds. Our sales volume has increased from \$38,561 in 1907 to \$1,683,846 in 1956. We have paid back in patronage refunds to our members and customers a total of \$583,848. during the past 50 years. We have paid \$100,409 in interest on share capital. We have become one of the leading enterprises in town. More important than business success for its own sake, however, is the fact that we have shown that individuals of differing backgrounds can work together in harmony to help themselves and each other. Through the years we have not always had complete agreement among

our members on all matters, but we have resolved our differences and gone on to new achievements. We have made mistakes, some small, some large; but we have tried to learn from our mistakes.

Now that we have paused for a few moments to review our past, we must turn our eyes again to the future. Our work is far from finished. We can continue to expand into new lines and services; the needs of our members are not all taken care of. We can increase our membership and our sales many times over. We can improve our business efficiency to provide greater savings. We can help those in neighboring towns who believe in co-operation to work together to meet their needs. We can better our attempts to gain active participation in our affairs by all our members. We can continue to work to increase the understanding of co-operative principles and ideals among all people.

In short, this is just the beginning of the history of the United Co-operative Society of Maynard. So long as we are aware of that fact, we can look to the future with confidence. We invite all who believe in the principles of democracy to join with us to make our next fifty years even more successful than the past. The doors are open to all, without prejudice toward race, nationality, politics, or religion. Every man, woman, and child is a consumer. The co-operative movement is the one way in which all diversities can be gathered together in the unity of neighborly service. All are welcome to take part in the opportunity the co-operative movement offers to serve the needs of the individuals of the community and so to serve the community as a whole. Let us continue to work together to make this a better and happier world for everyone!

Sketch of proposed new Gas Station.



There have been 14 general managers - Arvo Rivers serving the longest. His tenure ran from 1932 to 1964. After him was Edward Misserian and presently Robert Bennion. As of January 1969 Clements C. Newman is Resident Manager.

Some services have been discontinued since 1957. Coal and grain some time ago and mild deliveries as of this month, November 1968. Changing times and trends have placed in-town business as compared to shopping centers in a defensive position and the Coop is no exception. But after sixty-six years it is still with us - a tribute to the tenacity of little people.

I am indebted to the Maynard News - 50th Anniversary Booklet of the United Cooperative Society of Maynard and Mrs. Rachel Aho, longtime head of the office staff of the society.

Read at the meeting of the Maynard Historical Society -

B.R. Koski.