

# THE PIONEERS

By James Wilson

One of Santa Fe's most distinguishing features is its sense of history, which emanates most strongly from the Plaza. It is not surprising then that many downtown businesses share in this sense of history, serving as they have several generations of Santa Feans. Three such businesses are Moore's Men's Clothing, Bell's and The Guarantee.

Moore's has been in business since 1913. Tom Moore, the President of the company, has been with the business since 1947. In his 28 years he has witnessed many changes in men's fashions, but not in his outlook toward his customers.

"Our philosophy is that the citizens of Santa Fe are as sophisticated as people anywhere in the world, and we're trying to serve them on that basis," Moore emphasized. "We have as fine a quality of merchandise as can be found anywhere in the country. We sell some very exclusive items: \$50 neckties and \$400 to \$500 suits, for example.

"Not all of our merchandise is exclusive, however. We have a diverse clientele, anywhere from the kind of person who will walk into the store and spend several hundreds of dollars without thinking about it, to the elderly man who comes in once every few years to buy a hat—but a hat that is very special to him," Moore said.

Moore's, unlike many retail stores, does not feel threatened by the growth in popularity of the shopping center. "About a third of our business is out of town, mostly from Albuquerque or northern New Mexico," Moore said. "We always hear that so many stores are losing a lot of business to the big shopping centers in Albuquerque, but we haven't found that true at all. In fact, we get a heck of a business from Albuquerque.

are. But our main clientele is our regular customers, who somehow manage to overcome parking and other obstacles. They are the people that really support us."

Bell said he would not consider moving from downtown Santa Fe, but would consider starting a second store elsewhere. "But that's only because we're so crowded here. We could use all the space we could get."

Like many other stores in downtown Santa Fe, business has been good this year for Bell's. "It's been excellent. We've done much better than last year when we remodeled the store. And I don't see any reason why next year shouldn't be better yet," Bell said.

The Guarantee, like Bell's, is a family operation. The business was begun by the parents of the present president of the corporation, Mrs. E.N. Pollack, in 1922. Since then it has continued to grow under the direction three generations of the family.

"In 1922 it was only a shoe store," said Mrs. Pollack last week. "But the stock increased quickly. And today we sell a large selection of ready-to-wear women's clothing."

"Our emphasis has always been on fashion, not the general store sort of merchandise," Mrs. Pollack said. "In fact, ours was the first fashion store in Santa Fe. All the other stores at that time were the general store type. And the women were very excited when it opened. They were known to gather at the store when shipments of new items arrived."

"Today, we depend somewhat on the tourist trade. About a third of our business comes from the tourists. But like every other traditional store we have our





"The downtown location is very advantageous. We're close to the hotels, the banks, and all of the city, state and federal offices, all of which helps our business enormously. The Plaza area is not only the focal point of Santa Fe, but of the whole state of New Mexico.

"Santa Fe is an 'in' place," Moore added. "It's truly amazing how many people, wherever you travel, have heard about it, whether it be in other parts of this country or abroad. And the center of Santa Fe is the Plaza. I've always maintained that if you stood long enough on the Plaza you'd damn well see everyone you knew sooner or later."

Because of its location and the quality of its merchandise, Moore's has shown a steady growth over the past half century. "This year we're showing a large profit increase over last year. For some reason, Santa Fe has not been affected by economic depressions which afflict the rest of the country. This is true of today's so-called recession as well as in the '30s when the store never failed to show a yearly profit," Moore said.

Bell's, just down San Francisco Street, has been in business only a few years less than Moore's. Founded by Morris and Benjamin Bell in 1921 in Espanola, the store moved to Santa Fe in 1926. The store has been at its present location since 1938, and managed by its present owner, Irving Bell, for the past 25 years.

As owner of the store, Bell has continued the tradition of his father and uncle. "We have always called ourselves a family store," Bell said last week. "Our emphasis is on style and quality, as opposed to price. We sell mostly brand merchandise and ready-to-wear items. About the only thing we don't sell anymore is work clothes. We try for a middle of the road line."

The store's downtown location has been a great factor in its success, Bell said. "The location helps. The tourist trade brings us a substantial amount of business, being as close to the hotels and restaurants as we

cliente, our regular customers. After all, we've served three generations of Santa Feans over the years.

Mrs. Pollack agreed with Tom Moore and Irving Bell that the downtown location is the finest in town. "Downtown Santa Fe offers the finest selection of goods and services and professions of anywhere in town. We're within walking distance of all the hotels and government offices. And, of course, the tourist trade is the big bonus here."

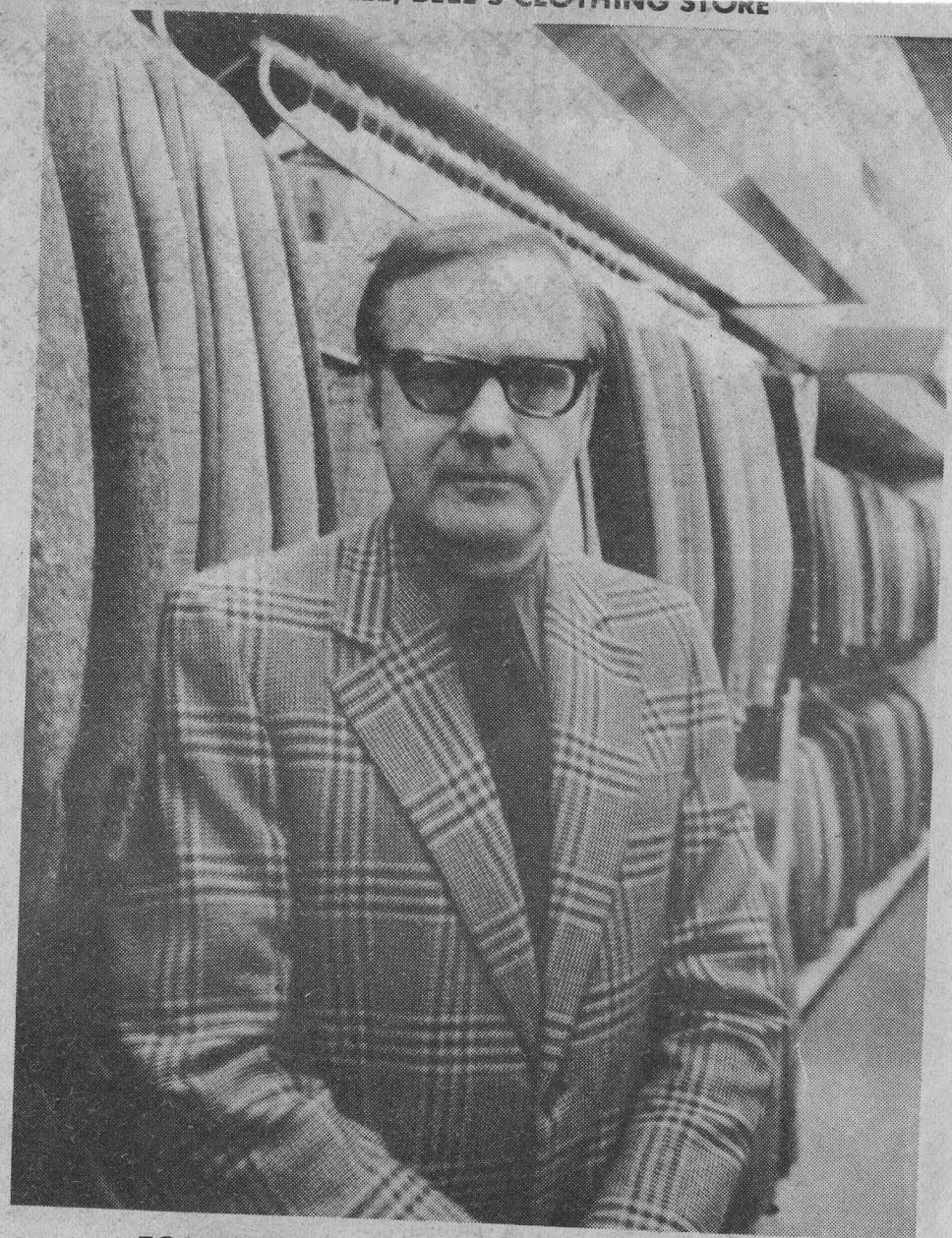
"One of the things that has changed most in the past 53 years is the buying procedure," Mrs. Pollack adds. "My mother used to spend up to six weeks at a time in New York City buying up everything she could get her hands on. In fact, she would take orders from people and try to find the size and style that they wanted. But it was easy to do in those days; after all, the town was only a few thousand people.

"In those days you bought things by one of a kind. No one wanted to have a duplicate of their purchase around. One time my mother got a new dress in and put it in the window for display. The wife of a judge came walking by the window and saw it, however. She came right in and said to my mother: 'You'll have to send it back, I bought a dress just like it in El Paso.'

"Today, we can do our buying in four or five days. Our representatives attend national markets usually on the West Coast, Los Angeles or San Francisco. We don't go to the East anymore. At these markets all the national manufacturers are represented and we can buy all in one place."

"The Guarantee has always done a good business and it's continuing to improve each year," said Mrs. Pollack. "What makes our business unique is that it is a family operation. One generation passes it on to the next, and they make of it what they can," Mrs. Pollack said.

The Guarantee, like Moore's and Bell's, has prospered for more than 50 years. And if this year is any indication, they will continue to prosper in the future.



**TOM MOORE, MOORE'S MEN'S CLOTHING**