

■ COLCHESTER

# Town's oldest clothier to end long run

By TRACY GORDON FOX  
Courant Staff Writer

COLCHESTER — In its heyday, Levine & Levine Co. Inc. Factory Outlet had a steady stream of customers, some of whom would drive 25 miles to get a bargain price on a good coat.

But after 76 years, the town's oldest clothing store and one of the first outlets of its kind is closing its doors, leaving behind a rich history that was begun by a poor tailor who had emigrated from Russia.

"We were probably one of the first factory outlets in the business. People came in and picked out the fabric and the style and the coat was made how they wanted," said Hy Levine of Stratford, whose father, Harry Levine, opened the store. "Today, every store is a factory outlet. Today, it's a big fake."

Harry Levine and his son Eddie opened the store in 1920 and Hy Levine joined them in business a few years later. The Levines sold the business in 1973, and afterward, coats were no longer made at the factory.

A "for sale" sign hangs on the side of the outlet and "Going Out of Business Sale" signs hang on the door.

In recent years, business was slow, as the store was dwarfed by larger outlets.

"It's sad. It's the end of an era, really," First Selectwoman Jenny Contois said. "I think many people are sorry to see it go. Now we have to look forward and not back."

What is in the future for the white one-story building at Lebanon Avenue and Mill Street is not clear. The store could be sold and remain Le-

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vine & Levine or another store could move in.

The store's current owner declined to comment on the closing, saying he would make a statement in the next few weeks.

But residents, particularly the older ones who shopped for their coats, clothings and shoes at the store, say they are sorry to see it go.

"I feel badly to have it closing," said longtime resident Martha Marvin, as she walked out of the store. "It's where I usually get my coats."

The factory was there when Wal-

ter Gadle opened the Colchester Bakery just down the street from the outlet more than 60 years ago.

"They used to make coats very well. I would like to see it operating. It would be better for the town, for everybody," Gadle said.

Goldie Liverant, who has lived in town for years, said people would come from Manchester and Hartford to shop at Levine & Levine.

"It's a loss to the community," she said. "Just like they came for the [Colchester] bakery, they would come for the store."



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An ad from the late 1970's or early 1980's.

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WE HAVE YOUR SIZE! EVERYDAY!  
Petite 6-16; Misses 8-20; Juniors 3-18; Women 14 1/2-22

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