

serve many purposes

furniture industry with a manufacturing center located in and around Grand Rapids. The middle south, North and South Carolina, Virginia and Georgia, for instance, continues to be the furniture manufacturing mecca of the country.

Because of the availability of natural resources used in the industry, the fibers for the textiles and the woods for the furniture, the industry is a natural in its present locations.

The industry has been basically family-owned until about 10 years ago. Now many of the smaller manufacturers have been bought by giant conglomerates to help them diversify their stock holdings.

Diversity is the name of the game.

It is overwhelming to see the choices one has in home furnishings. Like so many years ago, the influences on our homestyles are endless, be they ethnic or practical.

Besides the cool contemporary styles, we have all the traditions of centuries past from which to choose. Our forefathers brought their Welsh pewter dressers with them when they came over on whatever boat, but today the du-

plicator's art is so skillful, that all we have to do is rush down to the nearest furniture emporium and pick out such an item in a minute.

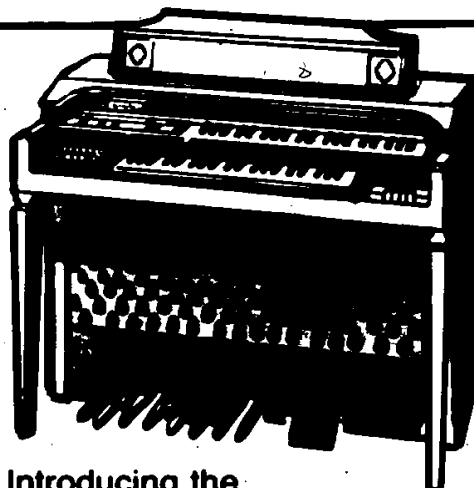
Then there are ornate French and Spanish styles and the classical English looks which are so strongly a part of our furnishings heritage. Relatively speaking very little furniture designed in America isn't reinterpretations of older styles. A great deal of the contemporary furnishings are designed elsewhere.

Even so, after we get all these designs together, we make the best and most furniture in the world.

Fortunately, we are becoming less self-conscious about interpreting our own lifestyles, too, so we are using more diversity in our home decors.

This is a healthy sign as we move into a period where our homes will continue to be increasingly important to maintaining individuality. The auto industry may be forced to get back to Henry Ford's original car color scheme, 'Available in any color, as long as it's black,' but the home furnishings industry appears to be in fabulous shape as far as variety is concerned.

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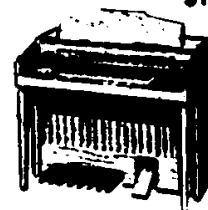
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