

Small Furniture Company Has Early American Items

By JESS MAXWELL
Staff Writer

A small, colonial-style building sits near modern Demery's in downtown Birmingham.

An Early American sign, not unlike that which could be found 150 years ago, is hanging in front

of the building, located at 332 Hamilton.

It reads: David E. Davis, Early American furniture reproductions, antiques and novelties.

INSIDE, THE building and atmosphere is as colonial as the fur-

niture that is sold there.

Davis, a resident of Huntington Woods, is a 32-year veteran of the furniture business. He formerly managed the Triangle Furniture store, Birmingham, before opening his shop on April 15.

Davis handles "a carefully selected line of American Furniture" and manufactures custom items in the shop's basement.

Davis and his wife, Margaret, cover territory on weekends to locate items with historical significance or unusual features to market in the shop.

"I GO IN for wood, brass, copper, and iron items," Davis said, "and sometimes we do a lot of searching to find just what we want."

The Davises frequently search small towns and stores in Canada for unusual items to feature in the shop.

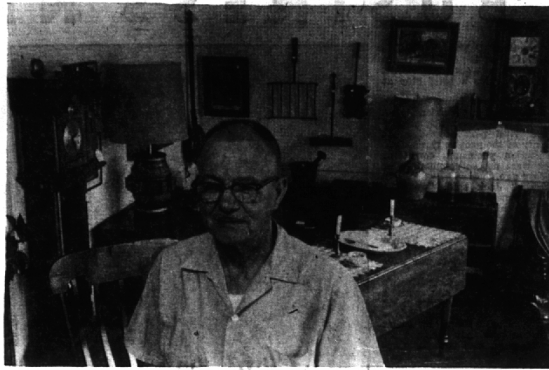
"The Canadian market has not been combed as much as the American market," he said.

DAVIS DESIGNS AND makes furniture in the woodworking shop in the store's basement.

"I sometimes adapt old, colonial patterns into my own designs to keep in pace with today's living," he said.

Custom jobs are sometimes dictated by the customer. "I'll make whatever my customers want," he said. "If they have their own design, I'll make it."

Davis does all craft work by



The Woodworker

David E. Davis, 322 Hamilton, Birmingham, is a former furniture store manager turned collector and manufacturer. Davis business 32 years and is familiar with "what customers want."

hand, including turning and joining. His products reflect this handicraftmanship.

"I spend several weeks on some projects," he said.

DAVIS' STORE, while small, contains many unusual reproductions and antiques, including a pre-Civil-War barber's chair and a 135-year-old foot locker made in England.

He is presently restoring a dog training chair made in 1800 for an area customer.

"I prefer to copy and work on old furniture," Davis said, "because old things are homier, warmer, and more enduring."

"Modern furniture has not yet proved to be lasting," he said. "Good designs have immortality."

"IT USED TO be that furniture was built to fit the region, but today it is constructed to fit the home," Davis said.

"Thus, the only way to get furniture today to fit the area is to purchase customized items," he said.

Davis was born in Nicholasville, Ky., and has been in Michigan since 1929.

A son, David E. Jr., lives at 340 E. Frank, Birmingham, and a daughter, Margaret, lives in Berkeley.

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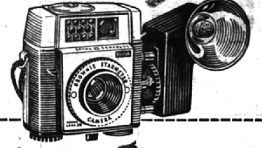
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