

surface; crack, separate from the ends; or honeycomb, separate inside. If it does, the separations must be cut out, along with any other defects.

The culling of the wood is the first step taken inside the factory. In the rough mill, defects are cut out; pieces glued together, then cut again to achieve uniform width, thickness and wood grain structure.

\* \* \*

**IN THE FINISHING MILL,** men tend machines that shape and contour the wood. A stack of armoire doors waits to be guided through a machine that simultaneously trims both sides to give them uniform dimensions.

On the second floor, Combs points out the carving department. Ninety percent of his company's designs incorporate carved pieces.

Two men hunch over their individual machines, each steadily holding the probe they use to trace the wood pattern: a pattern hand carved by Gus Haglund, a master carver whose interest was shaped in his father's own furniture factory in Sweden.

Each machine is capable of carving 24 pieces of wood at one time, once all the concave-shaped cutters are set to imitate the direction of the probe.

A consumer can tell whether a piece of furniture has been carved or appliqued, Combs says, by looking for a seam joining the applied carving to the body of the design. Appli-

In another high-ceiling section of the second floor, stacks of white stock crowd against each other. Furniture that has been assembled, but not finished, is considered white stock.

Combs wants them all finished, but first he needs to estimate the demands of the market to determine which of the 11 stains, seven French paints, 12 accent colors and three metal leaf finishes will be applied.

\* \* \*

**BACK IN A COOL,** darkened area on the same floor, the brass hardware and glass are affixed to finished pieces. As he holds a brass pull, Combs says a consumer should look to see if there is a cavity on the backside of the hardware. If there is, it is probably zinc coated with brass. He pulls the drawer out and says, "Check to see if the inside of the drawer is smooth. On a good piece of furniture, it will have been sanded and waxed."

On the third floor, it's mostly women who do the cutting, stretching and tacking of the upholstery material onto the furniture frames. Besides leather and Naugahyde, Jamestown Lounge stocks 140 fabric patterns in many colors.

The sanding is done on the factory's fourth floor, where the furniture is assembled.

While climbing up to the fifth floor, Combs notes that most furniture factories have the finishing department on the top floor. If it catches fire, at least just the roof will burn. Many