

# They Play a Role In Your Church

Chances are that the altar which plays such a vital role in your Sunday Mass and the crucifix and furniture in the sanctuary came from a factory at 85 Hague St., the home of Rochester Novelty Works.

Although the business dates back to the last century it has been family-run by the Woerners since 1928.

Don Woerner, Jr., grandson of William J. Woerner, the original family owner, now runs the business and says it will soon be renamed Woerner Industries, Inc.

"We have probably done work for every church in the diocese over the years," says Woerner, "and our work is of a continuing nature since we do repairs, replace damaged furniture and remodel."

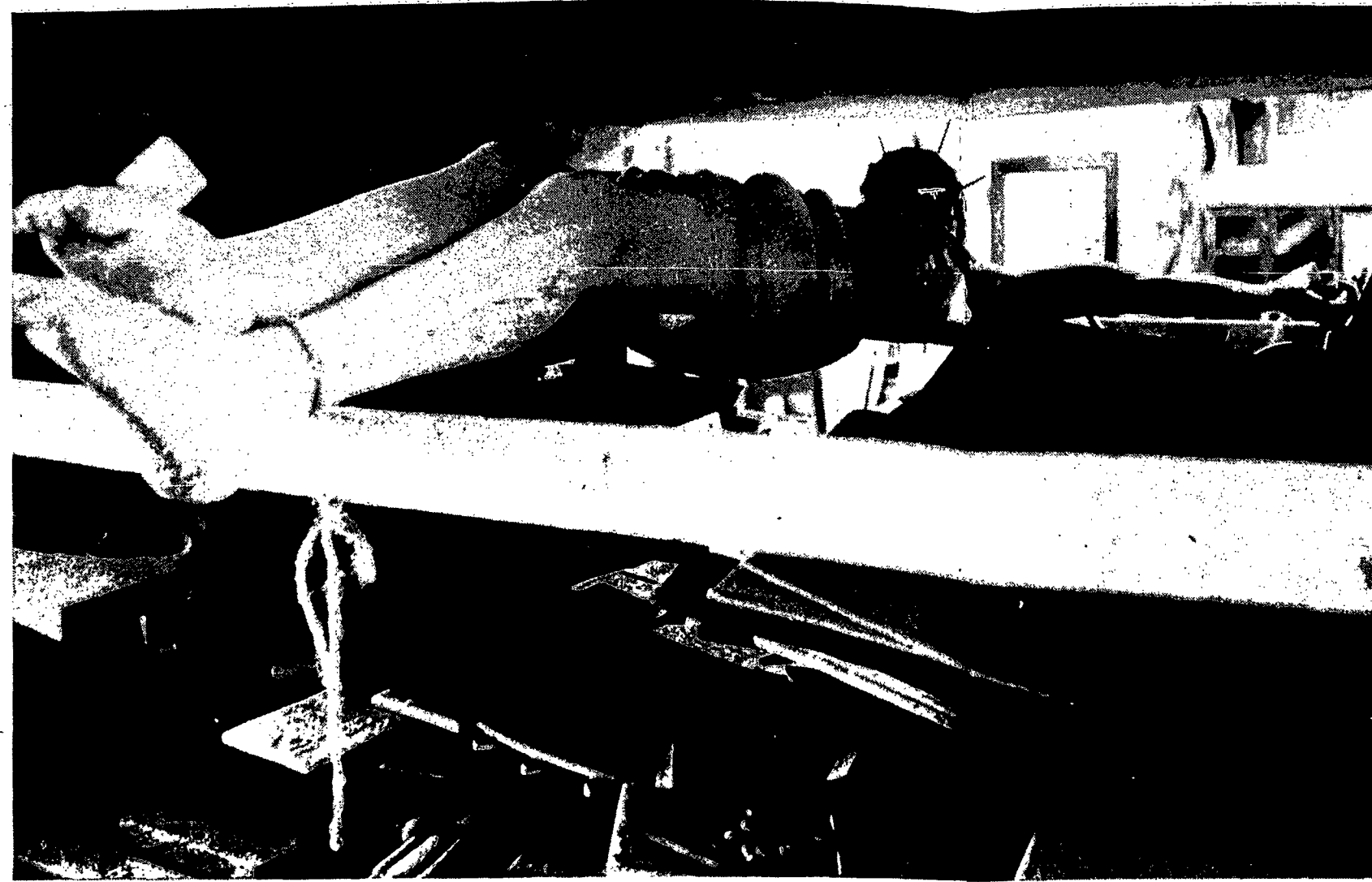
But their work is not limited to just this diocese. "We supply about 200 active dealers throughout the country, from Los Angeles to Bangor, Maine," said Joe Pohl, vice president in charge of sales.

In fact, most of the firm's business is extra-diocesan.

The factory, which employs 35, does not manufacture only church goods but also does custom metal work.

In the early 1900s the business was run by a "Polly" O'Neil and when he began to make metal cylinders for coin sorters he turned to William J. Woerner who was then operating a tool and die shop.

When Mr. O'Neil died, his brother asked Woerner to take over the entire business and that's how the family entered a long and pleasant association in the church goods industry.



This linden wood Corpus is imported from Italy and is about five feet long. Here it rests on a storage shelf.



A workman carries the Corpus to another part of the shop where it will be affixed to a cross manufactured by Rochester Novelty.

Bishop Hogan's coat of arms which is behind his throne in Sacred Heart Cathedral was hand-carved at Rochester Novelty Works; most of it done by the head of the firm, Don Woerner Jr.



A workman finishes a piece of church furniture.



This picture taken by Tony Cerra Studio and shows the interior of St. Jerome's Church in East Rochester after it was remodeled by Rochester Novelty. "We did everything except the pews," says Don Woerner Jr. "We made the altars, the wrought iron work, the painting, the decor."



The Corpus awaits its cross and someday will adorn a church sanctuary.

Photographs By Bob Kiger