



Bedient — handmade quality

In this era of mass production, it is unusual to find a factory that produces only one or two times a year. But since its founding 14 years ago, the Gene Bedient Organ Co., 344 S. 18th St., has produced only 17 pipe organs.

Every part that goes into a Bedient organ is handmade by Bedient and his six employees in the company shop. Even the pipes are made from metal cast in Bedient's factory.

Bedient said he is not interested in mass-production but in becoming more efficient. But efficiency won't be gained "at the sacrifice of losing the artistic integrity the organs have now," he said.

Bedient said his organs are unique because they are built in the old-time manner and their design is historical. Only two or three other companies in

to rebuild some of his first organs at great expense, he said.

Although he said he has always had plenty of work orders, he hasn't always gotten good prices for his organs. Bedient organs now start at \$15,000 and may cost as much as \$350,000.

Bedient said that because his instruments are pipe, not electronic organs, they produce a more natural sound that lends itself more to the authentic music of earlier days, he said.

Rod Carlson, a sophomore organ music major at UNL, said the sound of the Bedient organ he plays at church sets it apart from other organs. Carlson is the organist for St. Mark's on Campus, 13th and R streets. He said the authenticity of the organ's sound, along with the acoustics of the church,



Kaleidoscope

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the United States manufacture handmade organs, he said.

The Christ United Methodist Church, at 46th and A streets, owns a Bedient organ. The organist, Pat Kaltenberger of 7721 Myrtle St., said the quality of Bedient organs is high.

Kaltenberger said Bedient is also an excellent musician. He earned a master's degree in organ music from UNL. It was during his studies at UNL that his factory indirectly got its start.

Bedient serviced organs as a way of supporting himself during college and "drifted into manufacturing them" after graduation, he said.

He said he had had no training in manufacturing organs before he began his company. A few mistakes early in his organ-building career forced him

give him more control over the sound.

"I feel more a part of the music when I play that organ," Carlson said.

Wesley House, 640 N. 16th St., also has an organ built by the Lincoln company.

Kaltenberger said Bedient has struggled to build up his business in the past 10 years and it hasn't been easy. But Bedient is becoming well-known among professional organists, she added.

The struggles don't seem to be over for Bedient. The city of Lincoln has ordered that he move his factory. It has been on South 18th Street since 1972, but the building is not in a commercial zone. Bedient plans to move the shop to Airpark within the next few weeks.



From top left, clockwise:

A Bedient-built organ graces St. Mark's on the Campus, 13th and R streets.

Owner Gene Bedient shapes some of the smaller pipes for the organ now being manufactured at the shop.

Terri Joris soders one of the 1,100 pipes that will be used in building the "medium-sized" organ now in production.

An all-wood keyboard awaits talented fingers.

Mary Etta Parsons checks to make sure a pipe end is level.

