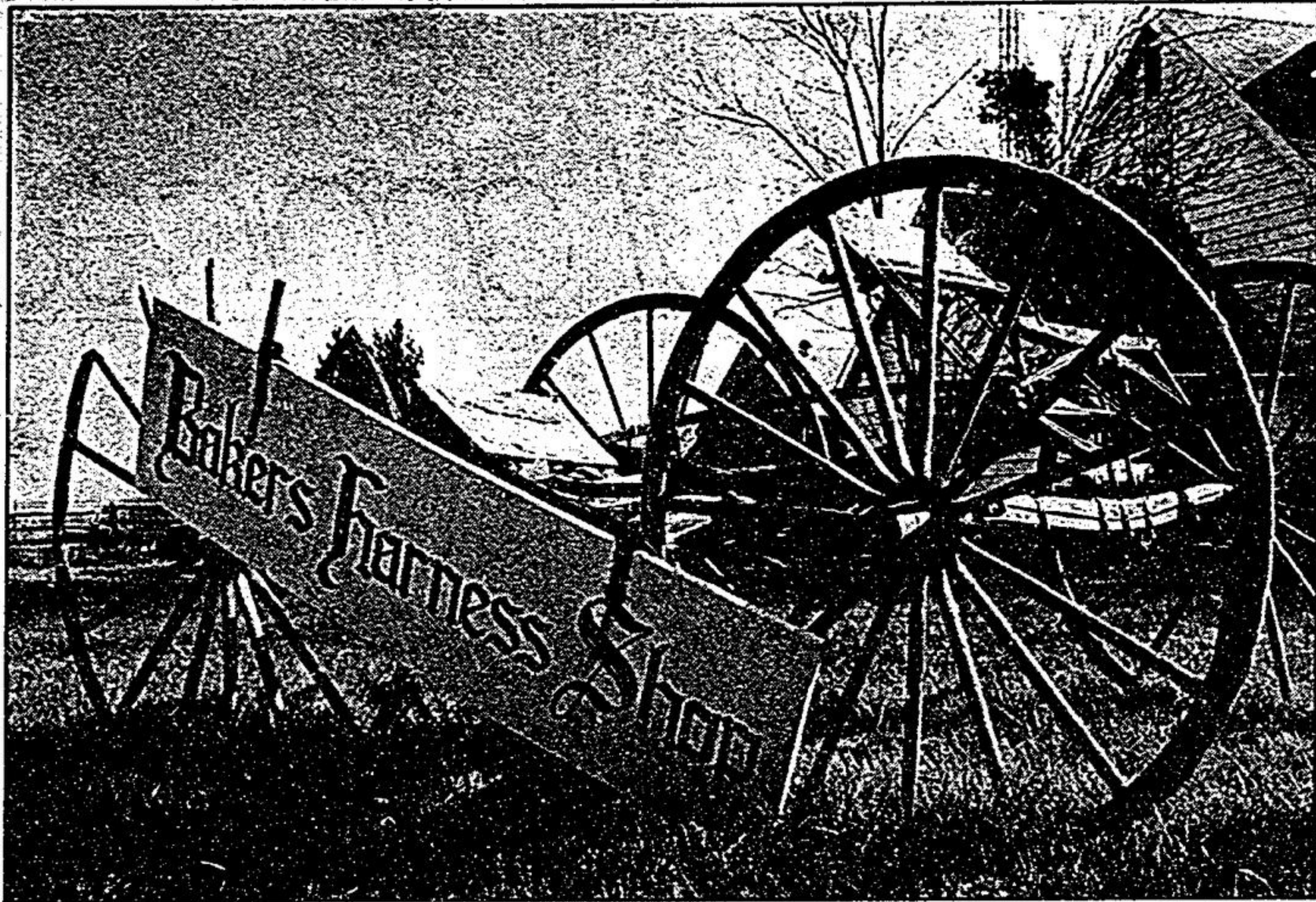
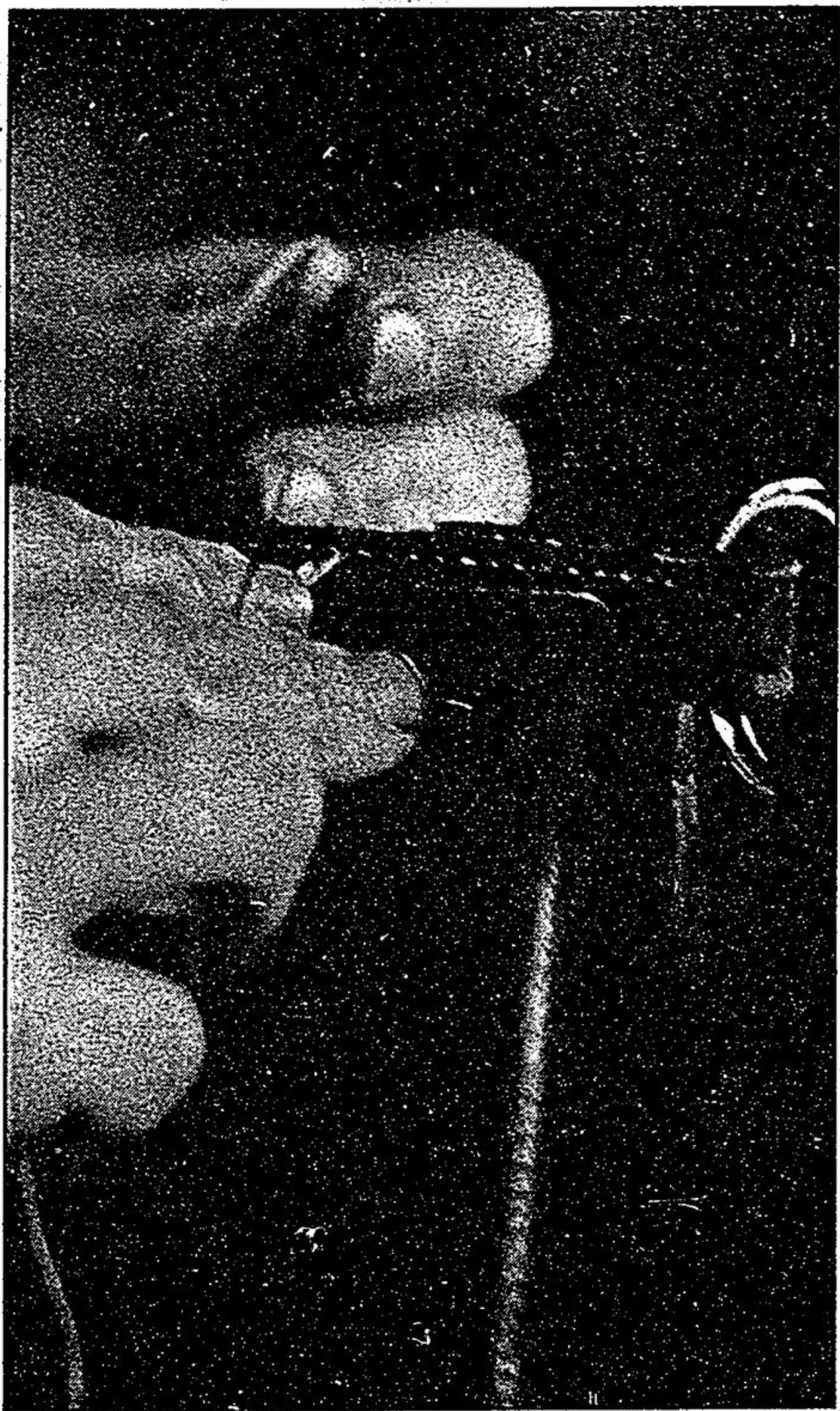


Harness shop withstands time



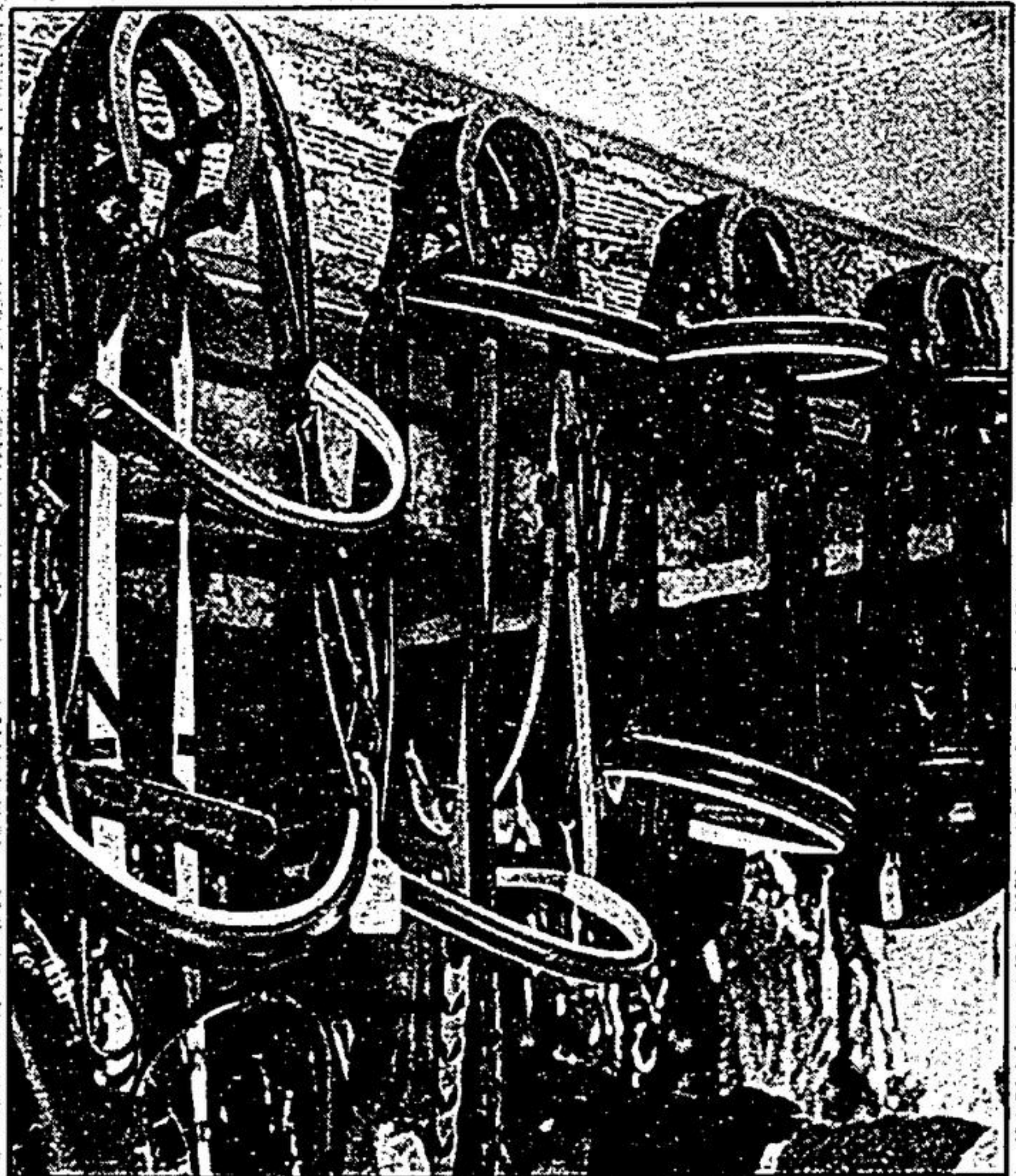
The harness shop is an informal place to do business. Neither cats nor children are turned away, even when Carmen Griscti's making a long distance call. Besides saddles and repairs, Griscti

does custom work including show halters for livestock, halters for camels and reindeer at the Metro Zoo and leatherwork for antique cars.

Age old traditions are continued at Baker's Harness Shop on Woodbine Avenue in Victoria Square. Carmen Griscti runs the shop using methods developed over hundreds of years. He grew up on a farm in New Brunswick and apprenticed to Coxworthy Saddlemakers in Newmarket. He gained more training at Black Creek Pioneer Village and went to work for Isaac Baker. In 1980, he bought out the company from Baker. Above, Griscti meticulously stitches through the leather on a bridle. Below, he shaves the leather to be looped through an O-ring, as seen above. When he stitches along the loop, two layers of shaved leather will be as thick as one layer of unshaved leather strapping.



Below, a sampling of Carmen Griscti's custom made bridles. He and his wife Michele run the business with three other employees. It was started during the depression by Isaac Baker. Although Griscti has owned the business since 1980, he moved to Victoria Square 2½ years ago.



Photos by Bill Lanning