



SYMPHONY'S NEW HEADQUARTERS

An old lamp, around which music stands were grouped, stands as it did when symphony members practiced in Miss Maud Gibbon's house in the late 1930's

Symphony Founder's House Being Put To Familiar Use

The Charleston Symphony Orchestra finally "came home" this week when it moved its offices to the house of its founder, Maud Gibbon, at 97 Rutledge Ave.

Miss Gibbon founded the symphony in 1919 but it was unable to continue through the Great Depression. She reorganized it in 1936 and permitted the members to use her house for rehearsals and office space for nearly 10 years.

The three-story house is very much as Miss Gibbon left it several years ago. Her furniture and other furnishings still are there and the symphony plans to make few changes. It will use only the first floor for office space. Lucien DeGroote, director of the symphony, also will give some private lessons at the house.

The first floor has a number of cabinets filled with street music and orchestral scores. The number of pieces must run into the hundreds, although no one is certain because they have never been catalogued. During World War II, orchestral scores were extremely hard to come by and most of the music available to the symphony came from Miss Gibbon's library.

The downstairs walls are covered with autographed pictures of the numerous guest musicians who have appeared with the symphony through the years. Before Miss Gibbon retired in 1948, many of the guest artists, including the famous cellist Pablo Casals, stayed in her home.

On the third floor is the workshop where Miss Gibbon repaired her own instruments. She was obviously an able woman to have been able to organize the symphony, do most of the work necessary to keep it going, play the cello expertly, and fix any instruments in need of repair.

Scattered through the house are numerous stringed instruments. A piano stands downstairs, although Miss Gibbon once said she never was

very interested in playing the piano. There are also several violins. But the thing which immediately strikes the visitor is the number of cellos. Symphony officials have found at least ten of them, in addition to parts for several more. The strings are broken or gone, but otherwise they are in good condition.

Another item of interest is the old lamp with a shade approximately three feet in

diameter. Small sections of the orchestra practiced around this lamp which could accommodate five or six music stands.

In fact, the house is a museum reflecting the personality of a single person. Anyone visiting the symphony offices cannot help being drawn by the organization's history. Simply by looking around them they will see what made the symphony able to continue uninterrupted for 32 years.



REMINDERS OF SYMPHONY'S PAST

Five of the ten cellos found in the Maud Gibbon house stand in front of one of the cabinets filled with orchestral scores. On the wall hang photographs of some of the symphony's former guest musicians. (Staff Photos by Swain)