

# Home Reveals Intriguing Stories Of The Past

By Sally Wright

Antique buffs would treasure an afternoon at the F.L. "Linnie" Gibbings home, 145 E. 3rd St.

Although it would be a "busman's holiday" the collector would find an accumulation of intriguing items from around the world. And the novice would be completely captivated by fascinating tales that concern each clock, vase, lamp, or chair.

Mr. and Mrs. Gibbings have never haunted antique shops or ferreted out old rocking chairs at auctions. Most of the heirlooms they now possess were owned by members of Mr. Gibbings' family.

Only once did Mr. Gibbings succumb to the lure of the antique dealer. He purchased several pieces of Capo di Monte (top of the mountain) china while stationed in Italy during the Second World War.

"I became acquainted with the Italian antique dealer and kept after him until he admitted he had some really valuable pieces. The two items he finally sold me, among them a gold and white soup tureen, are from a set of dishes Napoleon had made for Josephine during the early 1800's. Napoleon's coat of arms marks each piece.

"The Capo di Monte china features raised figures like those on the walls of Pompeii. And these pieces are almost as heavy as pottery." Mr. Gibbings also purchased some figurines and a square dish decorated with drawings of the Pompeii walls.

The enchanting tales continue as you stroll from room to room in the Gibbings house. With each piece of furniture or art object—a new and delightful story unfolds.

For example, perched on a sitting room table is an item from the Orient, which at first inspection, looks like a teenager's straw bag. But inside the silk-lined basket are two delicate tea cups and a tea pot, fashioned at the Chinese port of Hanoi early in 1800, carried to England by a British seaman and brought to this country by Mr. Gibbings' grandmother.

Another family heirloom, a set of "lion" china, came from Mr. Gibbings' great, great grandparents. The Gibbings also treasure a picture of this couple, painted on ivory by a Chinese merchant. The merchant did the painting because Mr. Gibbings' great-grandfather had saved the merchant's life while on a tour of duty in the British Navy.

Still another "collector's item" is a hand-woven bedspread which belonged to Lord Creswell Creswell, lord chief justice of London. "My grandmother bought it on April 5, 1888, just before she was wed," explained Mr. Gibbings. "The spread was made for high king beds with a canopy and steps so you could climb in. I guess we're a pretty conservative family—saving a bedspread grandma had before she was married!"

A late 17th Century Japanese kutani porcelain plate hangs in the Gibbings' dining room. The colorful plate, a blending of reds, greens, purples, yellows, blues, silver and gold, was given to the Gibbings by the late Morris Elsing. Elsing purchased the plate during World War II. "The painting was done when the feudal chief of Kaga took over the industry," pointed out Mr. Gibbings.

In the Gibbings family for many years is a "temperance" Bible placed upon a stand of cherry wood in the hallway of the home. The old Bible, with spaces for family portraits, devotes a full page to the ancient temperance pledge: "... believing it to be better for all and the better example, we, the undersigned solemnly promise by the help of God to abstain from the use of all intoxicating drinks as a beverage."

"Of course you know what happened in my family," quipped Mr. Gibbings. "No one signed it!"

Most of the furniture in the 10-room house is nearly 200 years old — and was originally owned by Mr. Gib-

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# Many Heirlooms Belonged To Grandparents

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blings' grandparents. His grandfather, A. E. Bristol, who grew up in England, was one of the founders of Pasadena, Calif. "The members of the pioneer group met and organized in Indiana," continued Mr. Gibblings. "My grandfather also met his wife in Indiana. They married and set out for Pasadena together. Granddad was Pasadena's first police chief—among other things."

A contrast to the antique decor of the home is the Gibblingses' den. Two buffalo heads and other mounted game hang over a rustic stone fireplace. Mr. Gibblings, a member of the physical education, health and recreation faculty at the University of Arizona, uses this room as a study and den.

The Gibblingses' house, built in 1904 by Brown & Chipman, matches its antique contents with picturesque Arizona history.

Henry Trost was the architect and Henry O. Jaasted, a retired architect and former mayor of Tucson, worked as a carpenter constructing the home. "I had emm here from Norway in May of 1902," reminisced Jaasted, "and it was the first home I worked on in America."

"The house was owned by the Bayless family and became quite a showplace in the early 1900's," related Mrs. Gibblings. "Bayless was a rancher and later a banker who was quite influential in Arizona, then a government territory."

"Built like a cathedral" the walls of the house, constructed of Malpais rock and brick, are 16 inches thick. The two brick fireplaces in the house are quite ornate and were constructed with unique arches.

Pagoda-like windows let you peek into the attic and the tin roof reflects the sunlight which glittered down on many a social gathering in the new Southwest territory. "Mrs. Bayless could entertain very easily on the porch—just by opening the French doors which enclose the two sitting rooms," added Mrs. Gibblings. The doors are paneled with leaded glass.

"The Baylesses obviously built the home for comfort," continued Mrs. Gibblings. "There are five rooms downstairs—a complete basement. During Tucson's torrid summers the Baylesses would literally move downstairs."

The Gibblingses acquired the home in 1952. Since then they have gradually filled the historical house with family heirlooms and antiques from around the world—blending an international flair with a Southwestern showpiece.

Although modest about the items they have acquired the Gibblingses take pride in the "international scope" of their collection. For example, a statue of England's William Shakespeare sits on a French marble clock nearly 150 years old. And in the entryway a Czechoslovakian cut glass vase stands on a 100-year-old Persian prayer rug.

The Gibblingses have acquired so many antiques they have to store a number of the family heirlooms. "I suppose we're the only family in Tucson," smiled Mr. Gibblings, "with a 200-year-old dresser in every closet!"