



HAROLD AND
MARY-RUSSELL
FERRELL COLTON
ON THEIR WEDDING
DAY, MAY 23, 1912.
(MNA COLLECTIONS MS
207-211-5(6-1))

Mary-Russell is credited for discovering an archaeological ruin east of Flagstaff that came to be known as Elden Pueblo. While horseback riding with Harold through the area in 1916, she noticed remnants of a prehistoric wall. Closer inspection yielded evidence of a multi-room complex. Harold mapped the site, naming it Sheep Hill Ruin. Jesse Walter Fewkes, a Smithsonian archaeologist led there by Harold, excavated it in 1926 and renamed it Elden Pueblo.

(MNA COLLECTIONS MS 207-211-5(6-6))



After the honeymoon they returned to Ardmore, Pennsylvania, and settled into married life at the home Mary-Russell named Singing Wood. She had a studio there and Harold commuted to work at the University. He kept his summers free and they alternated their vacations, spending a summer in Maine followed by one in the West. They had two sons, Ferrell, born in 1914, and Sabin, born in 1917. Ferrell's asthma trouble was eased when they were in the arid southwest, and this reason caused the Coltons to return often.

During the summer of 1916 the Coltons camped in Flagstaff on the Greenlaw Ranch (near today's 4th Street). Legend has it that young Ferrell picked up an object near their campsite and handed it to his father, who saw that it was a ceramic potsherd. An examination of the area revealed that it was an ancient ruin site. Excited by this discovery, the Coltons began an informal hunt for other ruins

and were delighted to find them abundant around Flagstaff. They determined to locate these ruins systematically, mapping and cataloging them, an endeavor that brought them back to Flagstaff in the summers of 1919, 1921, 1923, and 1925. In the course of these visits they developed a deep love for the countryside.

Great changes occurred in the lives of the Coltons in the early 1920s: Mary-Russell's mother died in 1922, their younger son Sabin died in 1924 after contracting valley fever in Tucson the year before, and Harold's father died in 1925. With the death of his father, Harold came into a significant inheritance, allowing him to resign from teaching and free himself from constraints of the University. The Coltons decided to move to Flagstaff for Ferrell's health, in addition to their desire to explore and map ruins in the area. Buying property north of town, they became residents of Flagstaff in April, 1926.