



PAINTING: OLD FLAGSTAFF BY GRACE REID. (MNA FINE ARTS COLLECTION)

Dr. Colton made an immediate connection in Flagstaff scientific circles during the first summer they camped in Flagstaff, due to a letter of introduction from Professor Edward S. Morse, a personal friend of both Dr. Colton and Percival Lowell, to Dr. V.M. Slipher of Lowell Observatory. The Observatory, founded in Flagstaff in 1894 by Percival Lowell and the site of pioneering astronomical work, is located in Flagstaff specifically for the clear skies that present opportunities for unclouded space study.

One early regional study in July, 1889, was by biologist C. Hart Merriam, who had a \$600 budget to study 5000 square miles in Arizona. His field laboratory ranged from the top of the Peaks to the desert of southern Arizona. He was amazed that elevation varied so much in just a few hours of travel. His analysis of the region led to his identifying six of North America's seven biological lifezones.

Northern Arizona Normal School, later Arizona State Teachers College and still later Northern Arizona University, opened in the fall of 1899 with classes for those preparing to be teachers. Its faculty contained a few scientists and artists. Beginning in 1929 with Lyndon Hargrave, MNA anthropology staff donated their time to teach classes at the college, with Dr. Colton underwriting the costs. This continued until the 1950s, when NAU finally supported an anthropology faculty.

Henry H. Robinson arrived in Flagstaff from Yale University in 1901 for a summer's work of graduate studies on the San Francisco Peaks volcanic field. He returned for the following two summers to complete his dissertation on the geology of the Peaks. His work preceded, by nearly half a century, the establishment of the U.S. Geological Survey, which still maintains a facility in Flagstaff.

The youthful U.S. Forest Service established the nation's first forest research experiment station in nearby Fort Valley at the request of Flagstaff lumbermen T.A. and M.J. Riordan, who sought the answers to why the ponderosa pine trees, once so profuse, were not regenerating after logging. Station Director Gustaf A. Pearson began studies into this problem in August, 1908. He served as an ex-officio MNA Trustee until his retirement in 1945 and today has a building at the Research Center named after him.

Pearson also helped Dr. Colton and former Lowell employee Andrew E. Douglass to pioneer studies in tree-ring dating. Pearson provided Douglass with tree-boring equipment, which Douglass used to perfect the science of determining the age of trees based on their growth, greatly aiding researchers in dating archaeological sites. Douglass experimented with trees on MNA property, and the first tree-ring conference was held in 1934 under pines near the Colton House.

Perhaps the most visible scientific presence in northern Arizona contributing to the evolution of MNA was that of the geologists and archaeologists who arrived in Flagstaff via the train in early summer, where they purchased supplies that were taken to remote sites located out on the Plateau. Then, in late summer, the bearded, sandy, and windblown scientists returned with boxes and crates filled with materials removed from the sites. Flagstaff residents watched with resentment as "their" artifacts disappeared when the men boarded the trains to return to eastern museums with their finds. Thus began the desire for a local place where regional materials could be housed, studied, and displayed.