

Along with their research duties, staff prepared the permanent and temporary or "special" exhibits, usually based on someone's particular interests. A potential project was discussed at staff meetings and then worked into the schedule. The staff member with the special interest wrote the label copy and found appropriate items to display. Permanent exhibits were, and still are, designed to introduce



MNA'S TREASURE CHEST IN 1934 AND SOME OF THE ITEMS INCLUDED IN IT. (MNA COLLECTIONS C-20.2)

MNA visitors to the natural and human resources of northern Arizona and the Colorado Plateau, while temporary exhibits amplify MNA activities.

Mrs. Colton, as Curator of Art and Ethnology, oversaw the exhibits. To fulfill the MNA mission to define art with a capital "A," she offered art programs, encouraged local artists, both native and Anglo, and worked to bring outside art exhibitions into northern Arizona. In 1929, she started the Arizona Artists Exhibition to give local artists a venue for displaying their work. This show continued for about a decade. Also for a few years, she arranged for traveling exhibitions through the American Federation of Arts which brought international displays of high quality paintings, etchings, and lithographs to Flagstaff.

Her interest in promoting local art led to the establishment of the Junior Art Show in 1931. Artwork by grade school children from all northern Arizona schools was displayed and celebrated; some are now a part of the Museum's Fine Arts Collection. Mrs. Colton was highly concerned by the public concept of art being "a frill" and not a part of a well-rounded education, and her tireless efforts toward both the teaching of art and the Junior Art Show exemplify her desire to alter this perception. The Junior Art Show closed in 1976 after four decades at MNA. It has since evolved into the Student Art Exhibition of Northern Arizona, and has been shown annually at the nearby Coconino Center for the Arts.

To assist youth art training, in 1934 Mrs. Colton assembled a collection of simple artistic objects and the techniques for developing them into a "treasure chest" that traveled to area schools. This wooden trunk contained supplies, samples, and instructions that helped the teacher offer basic art training. The trunk idea received national attention for its innovativeness.

Since the Museum's move to its larger quarters on Fort Valley Road in 1936, MNA exhibits have focused primarily on Colorado Plateau features and subjects of local interest. Cooperative work with other Flagstaff scientific institutions was featured in a 1958 timber exhibit that coincided with the 50th anniversary of the Fort Valley Forest Experiment Station. A similar exhibit is being considered for the near future.

In 1980, the Museum acquired a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for a new permanent anthropology exhibit entitled "Native Peoples of the Colorado Plateau." This exhibit relates the story of man's habitation of the Plateau and includes artifacts, photographs, maps, and explanatory panels. It offers the visitor a thorough introduction to prehistoric and historic populations.

The other permanent exhibit is on natural history and was revamped in 1992 with funding from the National Science Foundation (which Dr. Colton