

THE FOUNDERS



HAROLD AND MARY-RUSSELL FERRELL COLTON BACKPACKING IN THE SELKIRK MOUNTAINS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, POSSIBLY IN 1913. THEY ENJOYED OUTDOOR EXPLORING. (MNA COLLECTIONS N8C)

Harold Sellers Colton was born on August 29, 1881, in Philadelphia, the son of a very successful investment banker. He was raised in affluence, educated well, and enjoyed

the benefits of travel. At his family's summer home in Maine he developed an interest in marine life that eventually led to his becoming a scientist. Colton had studied architecture in college before discovering zoology, lessons that would later serve him well. In 1909, after earning his Ph.D., he began teaching marine zoology at his alma mater, the University of Pennsylvania. He also developed a small zoology museum in the corridors of the department, a forerunner of his later career in Flagstaff.

Mary-Russell Ferrell was born on March 25, 1889, and raised in Philadelphia. From her earliest years she sketched and painted and dreamed of becoming an artist. At fifteen she entered the highly

regarded Philadelphia School of Design and studied oil painting and water color. Although Mary-Russell was the youngest girl in her class, her talent and hard work

brought her several prizes, including a scholarship for graduate study. After graduation in 1909, she became a professional artist with a studio in downtown Philadelphia.

Harold's and Mary-Russell's paths crossed in 1910 when they met on a backpacking expedition to the Selkirk Mountains of British Columbia. Upon their return to Philadelphia, Harold wooed Mary-Russell and the two were married on May 23, 1912.

They honeymooned in the West, including several days in Flagstaff during which they climbed the San Francisco Peaks to rekindle their love of mountain climbing. They both enjoyed Flagstaff and thought that it would be a nice place to live.