

A Saturday in Phoenix

*Saturday, February 11th*

On Saturday I decided to go hiking. And see Mystery Castle. And maybe check out the Heard Museum showcasing Native American culture and art. And accidentally see the World Championship Hoop Dance Contest.



*Also: Bowie Mural.*

I started the morning heading straight south until I ended up in South Mountain Park.



*Dobbins Lookout*



*Dobbins Lookout*

Then off to the Hidden Valley trail.



A Saturday in Phoenix



*Saguaro*



*Cactus Crown*



*Morning Sun.*





*South Mountain Park*

Nothing better than a little post-hike tour of another structure hand built by a person of questionable sanity!



*Mystery Castle*

So sometime in the early 1900's there was a family; mother, daughter and father living on the coast in Washington. Daughter and father build sand castles, sea eats castles, daughter cries, father promises to build her a real castle. Then he gets TB and moves to Phoenix without telling his family anything (even that he was leaving).

He lives long enough to construct this place, to ignore the letters his family send him when they finally figure out he's alive and locate him, and then to die and leave it to them as long as they come down and live in it for two years. They do, and the daughter lives here the rest of her life.





*Inside the house.*

As per usual with these places, people wanted to see inside, the owners start charging a little bit of money, and then decades later it's another tourist sight. Life Magazine ran an article about it, maybe in the 1950's, and dubbed it "Mystery Castle" for some reason, and the name remains.



*The mother was a suffragette; apparently one form of protest was to serve those who could vote with dishes advocating the rights of those who could not. Which I really like.*





*The "wishing well" on the right leads to the bar below. Used for things like shouting, "I sure wish I had a beer!"*





*Built with a lot of found materials.*

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*The guides recount that a groundskeeper stayed in this room and, upon hearing noises on his porch, would just shoot his pistol from bed instead of getting up to investigate.*



*Mystery Castle*





*He used a lot of discarded bricks from kilns. Until Frank Lloyd Wright also discovered them and suddenly they became expensive to acquire.*





*Portal*



*Mystery Castle*



It was into afternoon by this point and I wandered back near my Airbnb to the Heard Museum. Where, it turned out, they were hosting the first of two days of the World Championship Hoop Dancing Contest!



*Young Competitor*

I watched a few youth entries compete; they were very good. They use hoops, smaller than



a hula hoop and somewhat flexible, and their dances combine athleticism with joining the hoops together to make forms (like making a line from arm-to-arm to impersonate wings) and then acting out that animal for a moment. It's extremely cool to watch, I have other photos and a video (all from a distance, there were a lot of folks there) later in this post.

After seeing a few performers went in to check out the museum itself before it closed.



*"Arroh-ah-och" by Laguna Pueblo, 1830 or 1840 (ceramic)*



*"Tahu, Leader of the Blind Archers" by Virgil Ortiz, 2013 (ceramic)*

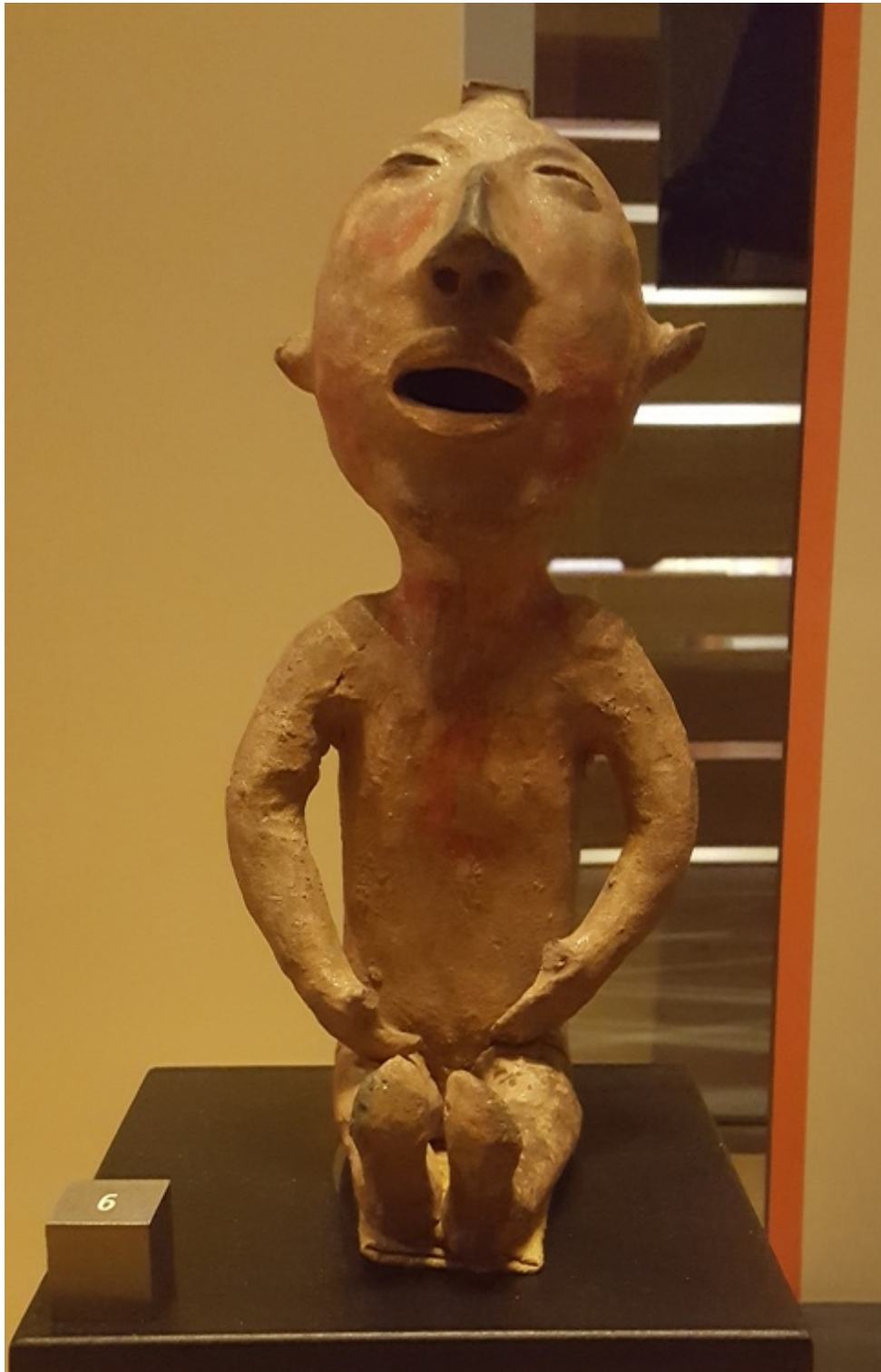


*"Navajo" by Allan Houser, 1973 (steel, paint, stone)*





*Shiprock Pictorial Textile, Navajo, 1920's (handspun wool, natural colors, aniline dyes)*



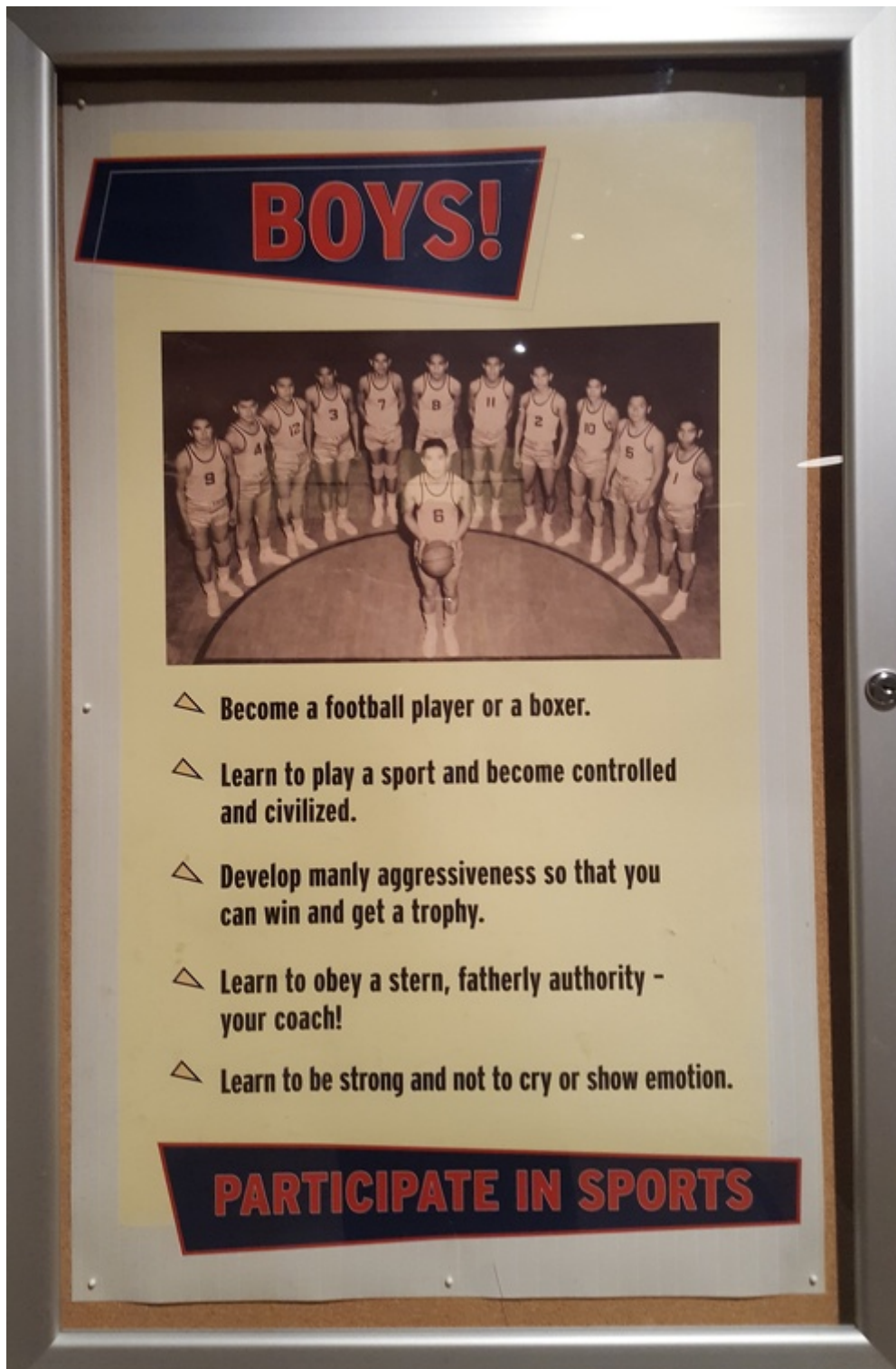
*Rain God, Teseque, 1890. "This is an early example of a rain god made before the mass marketing of these figures."*





*Jar by Dorothy Torivio, Acoma., 1984*





*Sign from one of the boarding schools Native American children were sent to after white America switched from active to cultural genocide.*



*Hoop Dancing*





*Hoop Dancing, the dance has a small set of “wings” with the hoops*

Eventually I hobbled off to find some food, legs sore from a long day. There were some more murals in the area, and then I’ll finish with a video taken of the Hoop Dancing contest. It’s pretty big so may take a while to load, but gives you a much better idea of what it looks and sounds like (there are two groups of drummers and chanters, who traded off with each performance so they could keep performing).



*Phoenix Mural*





*Batteries Low!*

Video is too big for WordPress! So you'll have to go view it on my photo hosting site:

<https://www.ardenstone.com/media/picture.php?/4799>