

23. Indian Guides

"The people climbed the slopes up to the crest where they waited for the rising waters of the flood," the Pima Indian told us.

We were all in second grade and were members of Indian Guides, a father and son club sponsored by the YMCA. The Indian was a storyteller guest. He told us a Pima legend about a flood in the Superstition Mountains.

"They all feared that the waters would soon reach the crest and drown them," he continued. "Therefore, they they decided to send down a dog to see if the water was still rising. The dog headed down a trail and disappeared. Hours passed by. Hours! Finally, they could hear the footsteps of the dog slowly approaching. When the dog arrived, it sat down in front of them.

"The water is going down,' it said.

"Everyone was so surprised to hear a dog speak that they turned into stone, and even today if you look up, you can see people made of stone standing on crest of the Superstition Mountains."

We liked the story and I'm going to come back to it shortly. First, however, let me talk a little more about Indian Guides.

My tribal name in Indian Guides was Brave Wolf. The wavy lines on my name tag below represent the name of our tribe: Running Water.



My leather Indian Guides name tag 1958-59

It just so happens that yesterday I took a hike in the Superstitions with a fellow member of Indian Guides. He told me that his name had been Black Bear. I will never forget what happened one night during a meeting of our tribe.

We were in Pima Canyon. Night had fallen. The adults lighted a fire in the dry arroyo at the bottom of the canyon and many of the boys were sitting on a rocky slope above it.

Suddenly my friend began to slide down the slope and fell face first into the campfire.

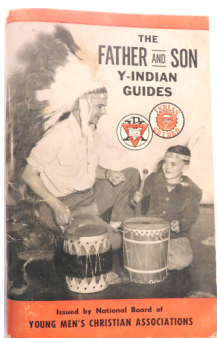
The adults immediately grabbed him and pulled him out of the flames. For weeks afterwards we would say excitedly, "And when he got up, there was a red hot coal in his mouth!"

"The most painful thing was not the coal," my friend told me one day laughing. "What hurt the most was the zippers and metal tabs on the jackets that the adults were whipping me with to put out the flames."

I remember that there was a boy named Elson Shields in our Indian Guides tribe. I recall that the tribal name of his father was

"The Tall One." (Elson and his dad were really really tall.)

While writing this essay, I thought that I could remember Elson's name too. "It could have been 'Little Owl.'" I said to myself.

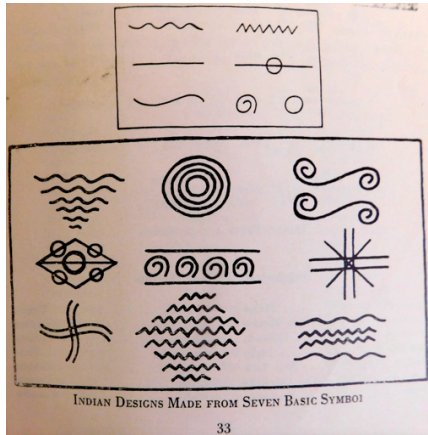


I was right. Today I found in my library the original club guidebook and inside my father

had written a list of members. The following is part of what was on the list.

IVAN J. Shields	The tall One
Elson Shields	Little Owl

The guidebook clearly explained the way to conduct ceremonies and club meetings and how to organize and manage your tribe. There was also a lot on traditional Indian lore such as the following regarding the symbols and designs of Indians. It shows that many Indian designs are formed from seven basic symbols.



Indian designs formed from seven basic symbols.

I'd like to know whether these symbols are authentic and if they may be seen along with their resulting designs in the petroglyphs of Pima Canyon.

All right, now it's time to talk a little more about the story the Indian guy told us.

When we had another meeting, Elson, Little Owl, told us:

"My dad and I went to the mountains, but we didn't see any people made of stone on the top."

Since then I have always been surprised at what he said because I know for a fact that you can easily see what the Indian guy was talking about. In fact, just yesterday I took this photo of the petrified people on top of the mountain.



Stone Columns that look like petrified Indians on top of the mountain on the 25th of February, 2017