



Shared Values: A Guide for Family Visits to the Fort Huachuca Museums

Planning a Visit to the Fort Huachuca Museums

To help you plan a tour, you should know that the Fort Huachuca Museum is open seven days a week, except for Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's. On weekdays, it is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and on weekends it is open from 1-4 p.m. The Army Intelligence Museum, is open on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and by appointment. There is no admission charge in either museum, although a \$2 donation is suggested. There are restrooms, water fountains, and ample parking. Another thing you can do prior to a visit is to check the museum's website. The catalog there will tell you more about the collection and how the galleries are arranged. Call 520-533-5736 or 3638 to learn more about the Fort Huachuca Museums or visit the website at <http://huachuca-usaic.army.mil/>

It is not always necessary to plan a visit, since spontaneous trips are often just as much fun, but involving children in the planning process will increase their sense of anticipation. Talk about what they will see at the museum. Explain that it is about soldiers who were the first citizens of the United States to explore the Southwest and provide protection for the first Anglo settlers. Talk about the role of the U.S. Army as the arm of the government that defends the interests of all the citizens of the nation. Mention that a military community has existed at Fort Huachuca for over 100 years, and the people who lived here before have sacrificed to make life better for those who live here today. It is a chance to explain the concept of change and to teach children that, while we dress differently, use better tools, and enjoy more leisure time, we share with the people of earlier eras a sense of values. We share a belief in what is right or wrong for our nation, our community, our families, and ourselves. These common beliefs connect us to the people who have lived here before and enable us to build on what has gone before. Shared values give us a sense of continuity and allow us to admire the contributions of so many American heroes.

Look for themes that you can tie in with your children's special interests or subjects that relate to what they are studying in school.

Go over some simple rules for behavior in any museum. In order that other visitors can enjoy the museum experience, refrain from loud or uncontrolled activities. No running, yelling. Don't bring food or drinks into the museum. The Fort Huachuca Museum is not a "hands-on" museum. The items in its

collection are rare and irreplaceable, so no touching. Discuss with your children what to do if you become separated.

To get the most out of your visit, combine the museum visit with some of the other activities on Fort Huachuca. The Morale Welfare and Recreation organization offers a host of fun things to do, like bowling, horseback riding, swimming, hunting, fishing, paintball, crafts and much more. For more information visit the MWR website at <http://huachuca-www.army.mil/USAG/MWR/MWRSPECIAL.htm>. There are also hiking and biking trails, and archaeological sites of ancient civilizations. Find out more about them from the Post Archaeologist at 533-9089. Finally, there is the Library which has an extensive collection on Arizoniana and children's books. The Library can be reached at 533-2666.

The Historical Setting

Family life has always been a key component of the Fort Huachuca experience. As soon as the first permanent houses were completed, soldiers began sending for their families. The first to arrive was Caroline Whitside, the wife of Captain Samuel Whitside, the post's founder and first commander. Her



20-month-old son Dallas succumbed to the uncertainties of 19th century medical science and was buried in the camp's first graveyard.

Other families followed and some of the children of Fort Huachuca would grow up to earn distinguished reputations in the world outside the camp's confines. Among them were the brothers Patch, Joseph and Alexander, who as general officers commanded during World War II; Fiorello LaGuardia, an ardent social reformer who would become mayor of New York; and Malin Craig, the son of the post's first quartermaster and a member of Whitside's troop, who would become Army Chief of Staff just before World War II.

So strong has been the pull of family life at Huachuca that the U.S. Army's first monument to the soldier's family stands at the post cemetery. To honor the sacrifices of Army families, a statue was unveiled at the cemetery in November 1996 called "Mourning Hearts: A Soldier's Family." It was sculpted by Jessica McCain and funded by the Huachuca Museum Society.

The Fort Huachuca Museums are located on one end of the "Old Post" area of Fort Huachuca, a National Historic landmark at the mouth of scenic

Huachuca Canyon. There can be seen the original buildings that have been witness to so many historic events and home to a long procession of soldiers who have made a difference. There are picnic areas further up the canyon and on Reservoir Hill from where you can see a spectacular view of the San Pedro River valley.

There are two museums at Fort Huachuca. The Fort Huachuca Museum tells the story of the U.S. Army in the American Southwest and the U.S. Army Intelligence Museum traces the development of the Military Intelligence discipline within the U.S. Army. The museums meet their responsibility to the past by collecting and preserving things—artifacts that have the special ability to speak over the years and tell present generations about what their forebears thought and did. At the museums you will not only see good examples of weapons, uniforms and equipment spanning more than a century of military history, but you will find everyday household utensils, books, quotes from diaries and journals, and photographs, all of which evoke a feeling and understanding of those who have gone before.

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According to the Department of Education, objects in a museum collection are important learning tools because they can engage children's minds. The object acts as a springboard to new thoughts and ideas and can enhance critical thinking skills like comparing and contrasting, identifying and classifying, describing, predicting and summarizing.

Visiting the Fort Huachuca Museums

Asking your children questions during the museum visit can be helpful in understanding what excites your child and helps them gain confidence in their thinking and verbal skills. Here are some questions that you can ask while at the Fort Huachuca Museum: Is it real? How does it work? What is it made of? A good name for this is... What does this remind you of? What do you think will happen if...? What if...? What words would you use to describe this object? How are these two objects the same? Different? How does it make you feel? Imagine that...

At the same time, give the kids the freedom to seek out that which interests them the most. Don't try to see everything in one visit. Younger children absorb information best in 10- to 15-minute sessions. Encountering too many new things at one time may overwhelm them. Pay attention to their signals. When they say "I'm bored," or "When are we going home?" it's time to go. You can always come back another time. Write down those questions that your children have that you can't answer. The museum staff can help with





the answers. Relate information conveyed by the exhibits to things the children already know. For instance, a World War II steel helmet provides protection just as bicycle helmets do. Help them by reading and explaining the labels. Encourage them to use their imaginations and tell stories about what they liked the best. The museum gift shop sells postcards, books, magazines and coloring books. These can help the children remember what they saw and add depth to what they have learned.

Educational researchers have determined that games help sharpen observation skills and stimulate curiosity. They recommend making up your own games while visiting a museum. Here are some of the games suggested by "Museums & Learning: A Guide for Family Visits," published jointly by the U.S. Department of Education and the Smithsonian Office of Education:

"Post Card games. Buy some postcards at the museum gift shop. Then turn your children into detectives and ask them to find the pictured items. Not only will they enjoy the hunt, but they'll be thrilled to discover the real thing. Were the colors the same? The details? The textures? The size? Later at home, the cards can be arranged for a home exhibition."

"I Spy. Have youngsters find an object in an exhibit and describe it to other family members so that each one can take a turn guessing what the object is: 'I spy something brown with sharp edges.' Or 'I spy something made of patent leather and wool.'"

"Seek and Find. Ask your child to find paintings that have his or her favorite colors, shapes, or objects in them. This game is not only fun but teaches children to look very closely at each object. Games like this give children a sense of accomplishment when they successfully find or identify everything asked of them."

"Where Is It? Ask your children to find something in the exhibit that is very old... soft... hard... strong... shiny... Or something that feels rough... smooth... hot... slippery... bumpy... itchy... Or something that smells yummy... burnt... sweet..."

"Tell Me Why or How? Begin the game by saying something like, 'If I could ask one question, I'd ask: Tell me why the first soldiers at Camp Huachuca thought this was a good place to live?' The answers are usually within the exhibit. This game can stimulate thinking about history and is fun in any kind of museum."

Continue Learning After the Visit

Building a collection at home can be fun and rewarding. Children can learn valuable skills from the idea of collecting. They can form their own collections from their toys, dolls, baseball cards, stickers, etc. According to educators, collecting should be encouraged because children can learn to sort, organize, arrange and label objects in a collection of their own. They can organize them by size, shape, color, or texture, and teach them to look at things from various perspectives. They will love to talk about their collections and explain how and why the various things relate. See if your youngsters are interested in starting a collection of their own and show them how things can be discovered at flea markets, garage sales, and internet auction sites.

You can tap into your kids' creativity by encouraging them to build their own exhibit, using items around your house. They can create drawings, paintings, sculptures, mobiles and labels to fill up their own display in your home.

Talk to them and ask what they liked best, also, what they didn't like and why. Relate some of the things that they have seen to what they already know. For an example, the Buffalo Soldiers received their nickname from the Indians who thought their hair resembled the woolly buffalo fur. Can you think of some of your friends or favorite teams that have nicknames and how they got them?

Rent some movies that have an historic association to the things you saw at the Fort Huachuca Museums. Parents should screen them first to see that they are appropriate for their children. It is also a good chance to explain the distinction between fact and fiction in movies. Here some recommendations: *Ulzana's Raid* (Rated R, 1972), *Geronimo: An American Legend* (Rated PG-13, 1994), *Buffalo Soldiers* (Not Rated, 1997), and *Soldier's Story* (Rated PG, 1984).

Check out some books from the library. Here are some suggestions: *Frontier Regulars: The U.S. Army and the Indian, 1866-1891*, by Robert Utley; *Forty Miles a Day on Beans and Hay*, by Don Rickey; *The Buffalo Soldiers*, by Robert Leckie; *The Black Military Experience in the American West*, by John Carroll.

Go to museum websites. A good place to start is the Huachuca History Program website shown above. There are links to other museums under "Related Sites."

