

# Travel Talk

## Jewish Art In New Mexico

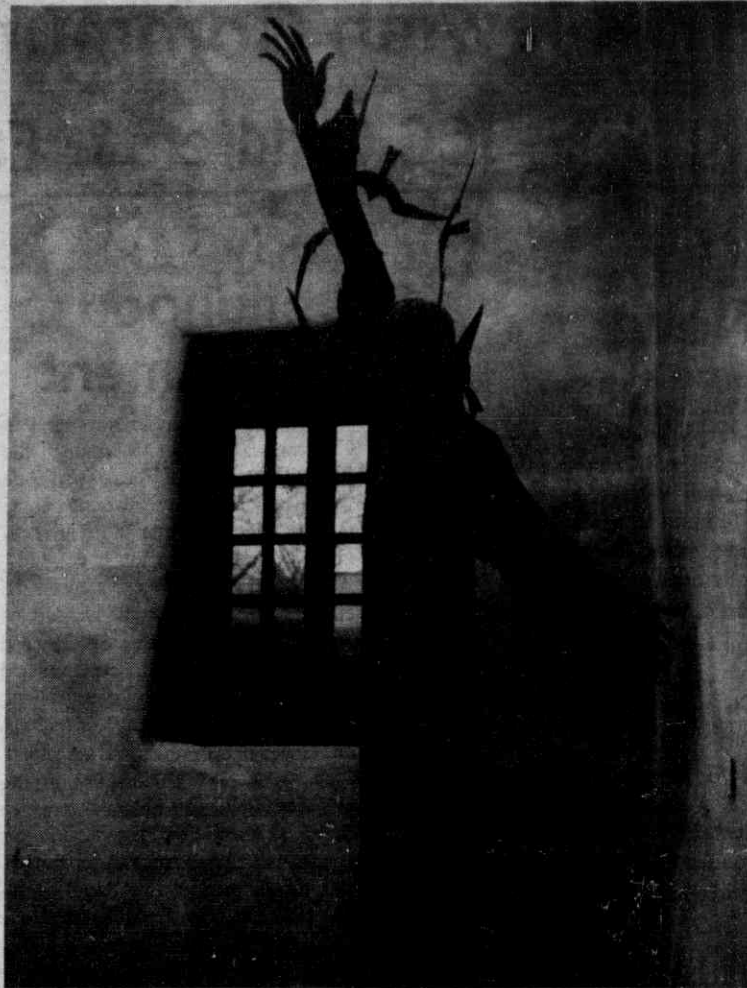
—The Land Of Enchantment  
By Joel Goldman

They came in 1540 looking for the mythical gold supposedly to be found in the Seven Cities of Cibola. Instead, the Spaniards found a vast land of scattered Zuni and Pueblo Indian tribes. The land, called New Mexico, stayed under Spanish domination until 1821, when it became a part of the newly independent nation of Mexico. After the Mexican-American War of 1846, the area was ceded to the U.S. and it became a state in 1912.

By the mid-1850's, railroads and mining brought set-

tlers from the eastern U.S. to New Mexico, and as they did in the South and Mid-West, Jews joined the westward movement, establishing a merchandising base.

A Jewish presence in New Mexico existed even earlier, when victims of the Spanish Inquisition in the 1500's fled to New World colonies. However, only recently has art work depicting our heritage made its way into the rich tapestry of South-West Indian and Mexican dominated painting and design.



Statue of "Noah and the Dove" on exhibit at the Museum of Fine Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico

And who are these Jewish painters, weavers and sculptors that call New Mexico home? Some come from Sephardic background, and blend easily with the Spanish influence of the area. They are descendants of the Conversos—a group of Jews who fled the Spanish inquisition to Spanish colonial outposts in the new world. Some are associated with the University of New Mexico and New Mexico State University. They are well-versed in the study of New Mexico Indian crafts, and have combined this knowledge with their study of old Jewish artifacts from Russia and Poland.

For those members of the Charlotte Jewish community planning a future trip to New Mexico, there are several places to see Jewish artifacts on display and to learn more of the unique contributions to Jewish culture in that beautiful state.

In Albuquerque, Congregation B'nai Israel and Congregation Albert can offer a good introduction to Jewish cultural life in their city. They are located at 4401 Indian School Road. Also, a newer temple, Nahalat Shalom enjoys an especially strong link with Albuquerque's Jewish artists.

Sixty miles north of Santa Fe is the art community of Taos. There, the Millicent Rogers Museum often exhibits Jewish art pieces. Details regarding Jewish art, in the Land of Enchantment, can be obtained by contacting the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society, P.O. Box 15598, Cielo Court Station, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87506.

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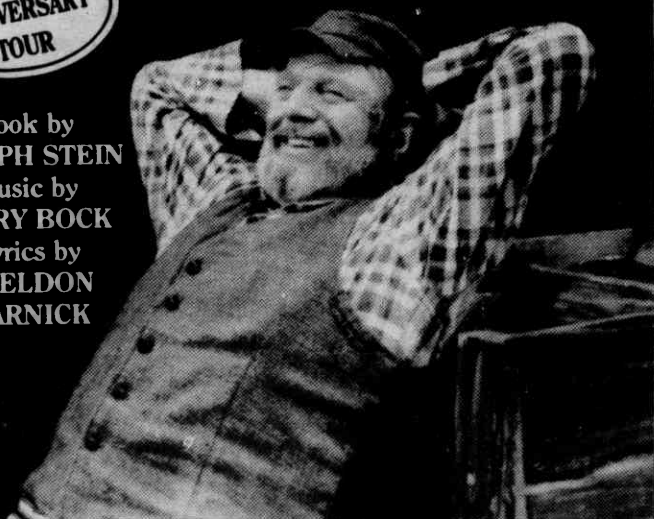
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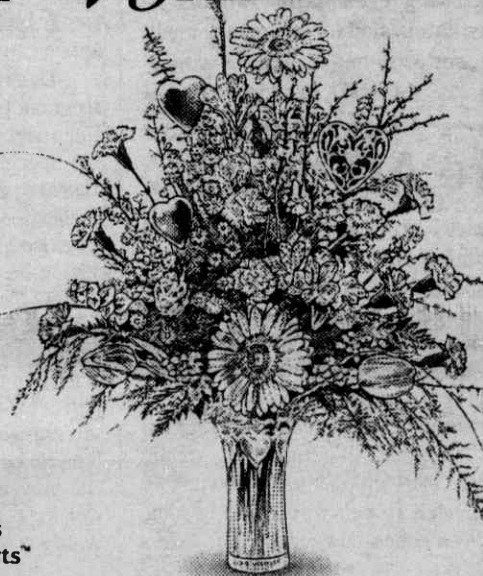
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