

Bill Jack

With some help from local friends, a visitor can meet Indians socially. I told Phyllis I should like to do so and she said "Of course. We'll go visit the Jacks." She picked up the phone and it was arranged in minutes.

As we drove to the northeast section of the city where the Jacks lived, Phyllis told me about them.

"Bill is a pretty unusual guy. He makes jewelry and is such a good craftsman that he is quite wealthy. He's had shows in New York. He's won many prizes. He grew up on a pueblo and when his business expanded, he found it more convenient to live in town."

We pulled up at a good-sized ranch-style suburban house. There were two Lincoln Continentals parked in the driveway. Bill and Eileen Jack were waiting for us, and their children, two girls and a little boy, lined up for introductions. The family exuded all-

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around affability. Their home was furnished expensively with wall-to-wall carpeting and deep sofas set in conversational groupings in a standard mail-order fashion. Van Gogh's Sunflowers were on the wall, and I thought this strange in view of the man's own craft and artistry.

Bill showed me his workshop off the front hall. It was not very large; just a few benches containing small machine tools such as a lathe, a band saw, polishing machines, soldering equipment, and a fair number of small hand tools. The whole family worked at the business and the girls demonstrated how they cut turquoise and coral and how they string beads.

Bill said that he would show me some of the pieces he had for sale and went off to arrange a display. I examined a large colored chart on the living room wall. It was a religious history of the world, from the dinosaur to Hiroshima, arranged chronologically, and depicting a flow from Moses, Vishnu, Buddha, Kung-fu, Jesus, Jesus visiting the New World Israelites after his resurrection, St. John of the Cross, Quetzacoatl, Montezuma, Robert Fludd (of the Masons), Joseph Smith, Gandhi. The text was embellished with appropriate graphical symbols such as ankhs, crosses, mandalas, prayer-

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wheels, ojos, ka-chinas, and ritual sand drawings.

Bill came back to the living room with several attaché cases and when he opened them he displayed what must have been a small fortune in silver, turquoise, and coral jewelry that the family had manufactured. I was overwhelmed by their beauty and could only think to ask, "Where do you get your designs?". He answered very simply, "They come from my mother." I would dearly have loved to have bought something, but the least of his pieces was more elaborate than my pocketbook could stand.

Eileen Jack then brought out coffee and cake. Bill put away his collection and we talked quite generally about the problems of Albuquerque. I referred to the religious chart on the wall. Its precise contents seemed to be outside his interest. He deflected the question.

"We are Baptists. After we moved from the pueblo which is forty miles away, it wasn't convenient for us to go back and forth very often. There is a Baptist church down this street and the minister spoke to Eileen. We joined the church and the children go to Sunday School there.

But when the time comes for the Pueblo festivals, my wife and I have a great hankering. We haven't left



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the Indian religion. We want the children to have these things also. So we always go back to the pueblo for a few days. You see we are very religious people. The Baptist minister wants us to be exclusively Baptist, but I don't see it that way at all."

O, Egypt, Egypt; of thy religion will nothing remain but an empty tale, which thine own children in time to come will not believe?



*Indian Silversmith*