

# BETTER THEATRES

*A monthly supplement of Exhibitors Herald, published for the information and guidance of theatre owners in matters of theatre construction, operation and equipment and to promote the ideal of greater and finer theatres.*

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Published by the Exhibitors Herald Co., 407 S. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.; Martin J. Quigley, Editor and Publisher; Edwin S. Clifford, Managing Editor; George Clifford, Business Manager. Eastern Office: 565 Fifth Ave., New York City.

## Aztec, Carthay Circle, Reflect Pioneer Spirit in Construction

*(Pictures on Page 11)*

SAN ANTONIO, July 5.—(Special)—San Antonio theatre-goers turned out in force June 4 to attend the opening of the Aztec theatre, presenting an architecture that carries throughout a single motif—that of the colorful, mural-like art of the Aztec Indian. This theatre, situated on the corner of West Commerce and St. Mary's Streets, is a distinct architectural achievement, and will probably give stimulus to the rising practice of creating theatres of a single atmospheric effect.

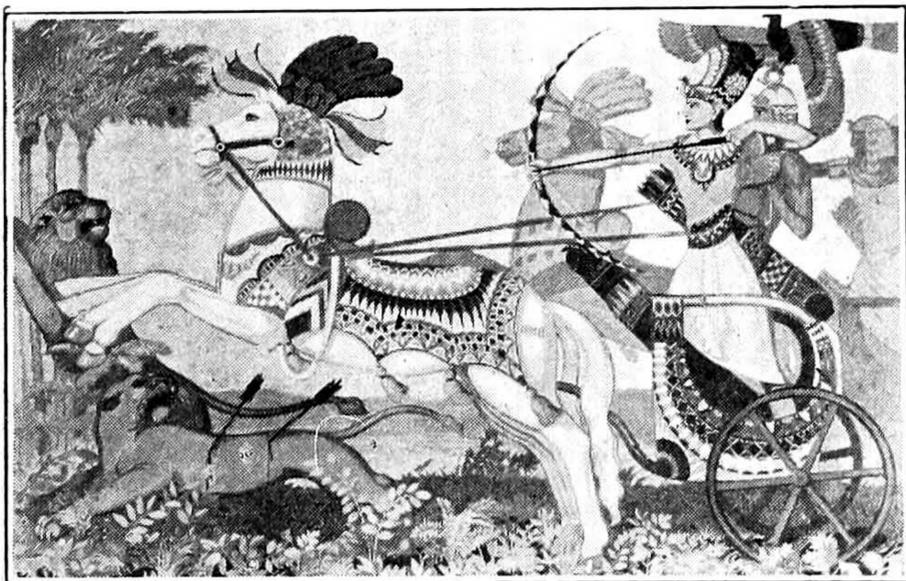
The theatre and the office building that bears the same name, erected at an approximate cost of \$1,500,000, is claimed to be one of the most beautiful structures in the South. A large vertical sign on the exterior is 50 feet high and is the biggest of its kind in the state. Like all other features of the theatre and building, the sign, being electrical, shows the imprint of Aztec art. Another electric sign on the roof is composed of letters six feet high.

### Furniture Specially Designed

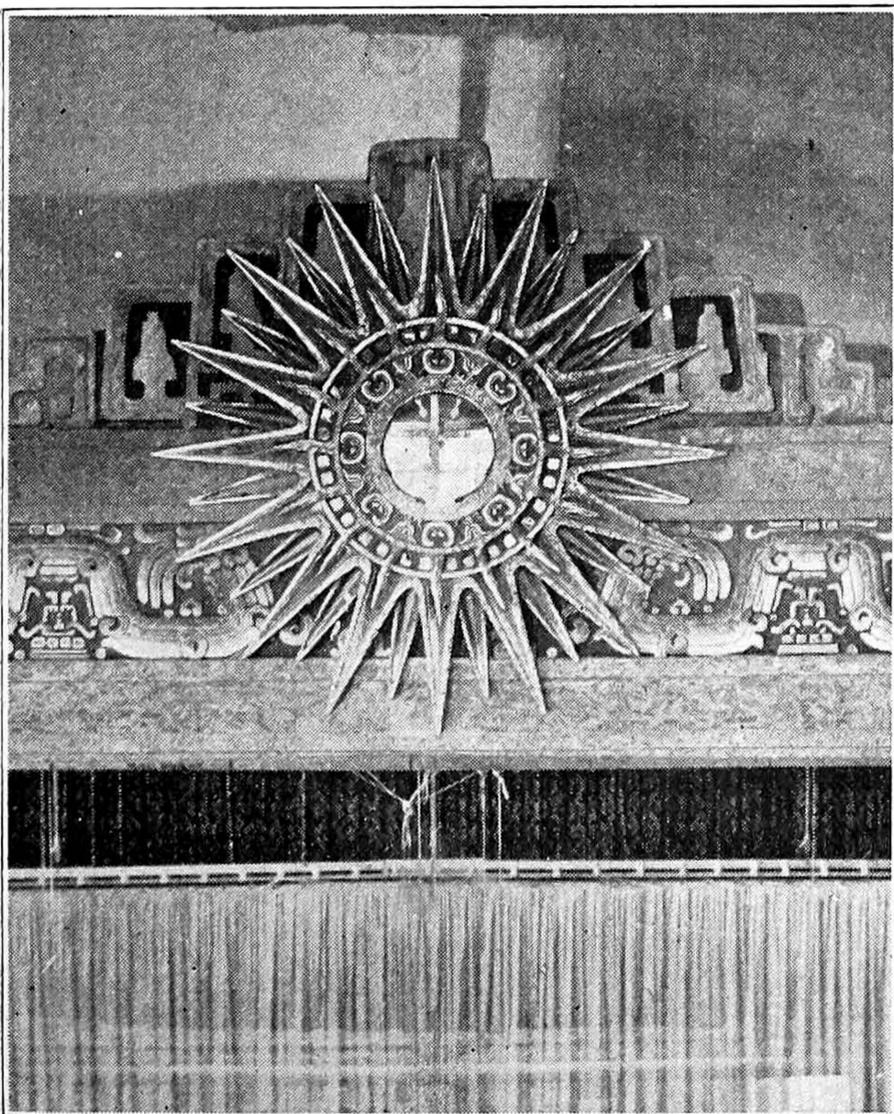
The lobby, promenade, tea-room and lounging rooms of the theatre contain hand-carved, especially designed furniture of black walnut and Pullman red plush, all carrying the Aztec motif. Most of the furniture is of massive proportions and was designed and executed by a native of Dresden, Saxony, who spent years in the

*(Continued on page 30)*

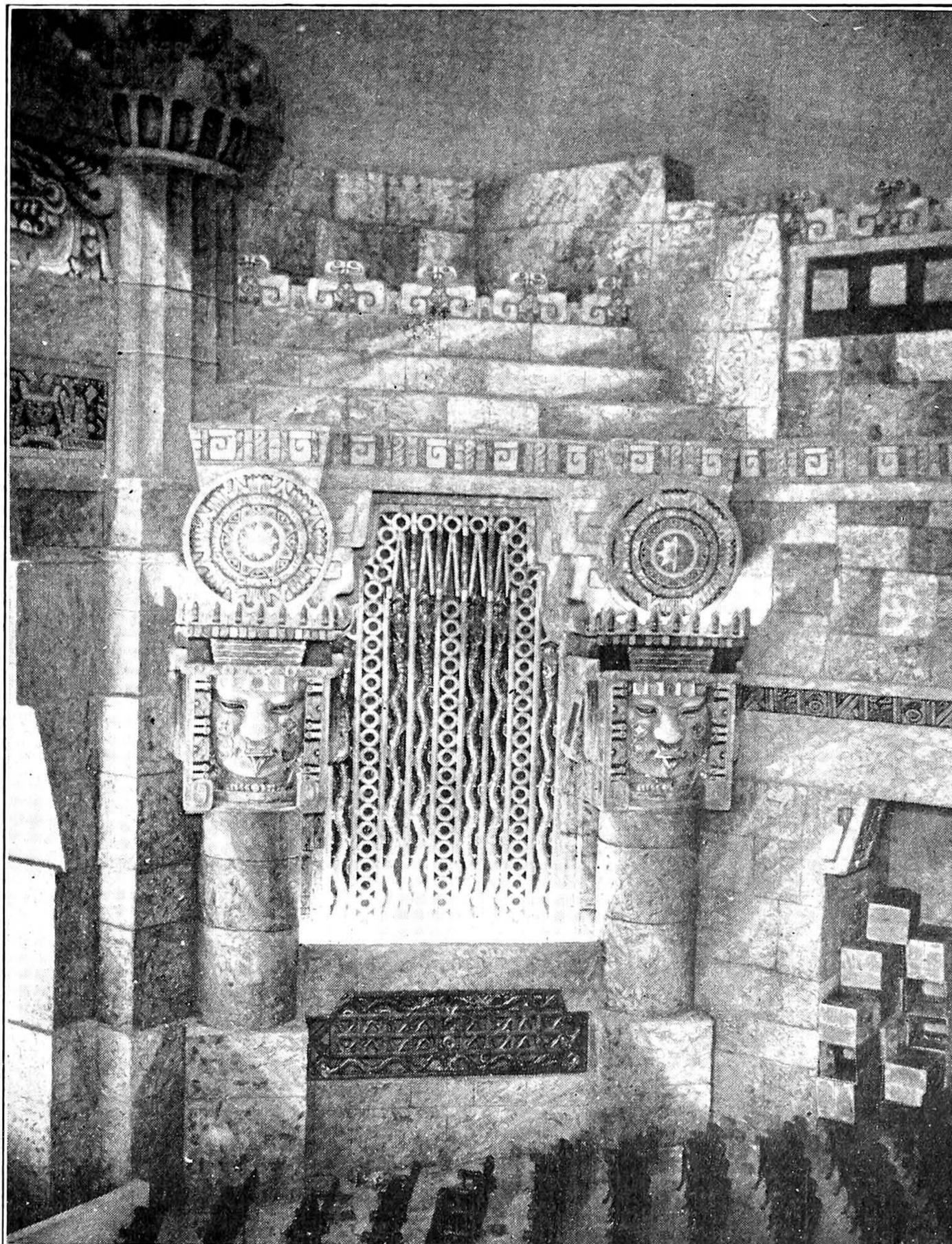
# "Better Theatres" Pictorial



*ANOTHER Metropolitan mural by Orth.*



*AZTEC shield reproductions adorning top and center of proscenium, Aztec theatre, San Antonio, a \$1,500,000 project. (Interior view at right.)*



*AZTEC in motif as in name. San Antonio's latest theatre acquisition opened June 4. Artistic magnitude is predominant. William Epstein manages the house for an independently formed owning company of which he is a member. (Story on page 7.)*

## San Antonio Aztec Pioneer Theatre

(Continued from page 7)

study of the art of wood-carving. The pieces are painted in the flat, mural colors of the Indians and are carved with symbolic hieroglyphics.

All carvings, paintings, architectural features and details about the building are absolutely authentic and have been faithfully recorded from drawings and photographs of several ancient manuscripts or codexes and from other friezes and details of old Aztec temples and palaces. The architects and designers, it is said, spent many months in research through rare manuscripts and codexes on ancient Mexican civilization, for the sake of absolute archaeological truthfulness. Bits of sculpture and paintings were assembled from the museum at Washington and some from other sources.

The interior is set with panels, faithful reproductions of originals in the Museum at Mexico City and elsewhere. One large

panel near the entrance of the lobby depicts three priests in the act of offering a human offering to the Aztec god and was known, in the original panel, as the Panel Of The Foliated Cross. The original is now in the National Museum at Mexico City. Another near the entrance is the so-called Panel Of The Sun, a very familiar panel of the panel antique group. It shows another sacrifice to the Sun God. Set into the walls of the promenade are other reproductions of historic panels.

The best reproduction in the theatre, however, is a mammoth panel across the proscenium arch which shows the famous plumed serpent which appears so often in symbolic Aztec art. Bas-relief and sculptured work appears throughout the building. Mammoth God heads surmount the columns that stand in the foyer of the theatre. Twenty square slabs which adorn the walls of the interior represent the twenty Aztec months.

A huge sun-burst in 20 colors and gold-leaf provides the center for the proscenium arch top. The asbestos curtain of the house depicts the meeting of Montezuma and Cortez.

The house is managed by William Epstein, who has managed theatres in San Antonio, Little Rock, Kansas City and other cities. The company that owns the theatre is composed of Henry and Jesse Oppenheimer, Albert Kronosky, Ernest Steves, Morris Stern, Robert Barclay, Dr. Ferd Oppenheimer and William Epstein.

The policy of the theatre calls for Fox, First National and other picture features, together with elaborate prologues. Among the prologue features are many famous entertainers including Piatov and Natalie, dancers formerly of the Imperial Russian Ballet, and Olive May, recently of "Sally, Irene and Mary." Jack Mason, producer of several Broadway hits, including a number of Flo Ziegfeld's productions, is production manager of the theatre and is said to have introduced the Tango dance to London.

The popularity of the Aztec theatre is dependent on the love that the public is cultivating for places of entertainment that reflects a real artistic depth of decoration.