

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PALM DESERT

# THE JASON JOY HOUSE 1952 DEMOLISHED DECEMBER 13, 2021

73355 Grapevine Street, Palm Desert, CA



Photo: Linda Holden Clode

This 2,918 square foot, 4 bedrooms and 3.5 bath home sat on .94 of an acre.

The original ranch home, recently demolished, had vaulted wood clad ceilings, central wood beams, clerestory windows, and a large covered porch reminiscent of the Frey designed homes in Smoke Tree Ranch in Palm Springs. This may be why Frey and Joy had the landscaping done by Chester "Cactus Slim" Moorten of Moorten's Botanical Gardens in Palm Springs.



**modernism week**

Official Modernism Week Event

#### **ARCHITECTS:**

ALBERT FREY, A.I.A.,  
CLARK & FREY  
JOHN OUTCAULT, A.I.A  
(1969)

#### **LANDSCAPING:**

CHESTER "CACTUS SLIM"  
MOORTEN, MOORTEN  
GARDEN

#### **ORIGINAL OWNER:**

COL. JASON S. JOY

# THE HOUSE



Photos: zillow.com



# THE HOUSE



Photos: zillow.com



Photo: Palm Springs Art Museum Collection

## ALBERT FREY

Albert Frey was born in Switzerland in 1903 and died in Palm Springs in 1998.

He worked for Le Corbusier in Paris, but moved to New York in 1928 and in 1930 partnered with A. Lawrence Kocher. In 1931 they designed the Aluminaire House, the first all metal (aluminum) house in the U.S. It was exhibited twice, the second time at MOMA in 1932 as part of the show, 'International Style-Architecture since 1922.' The Aluminaire now rests outside the Palm Springs Art Museum.



Photos: Palm Springs Art Museum Collection

It is fun to note that although Palm Springs rightly lays claim to Frey, his first home was right here in Palm Desert in 1934!

While working on the Kocher-Sampson building in Palm Springs, he stayed in this small homestead at the corner of highways 111 and 74 in Palm Desert.

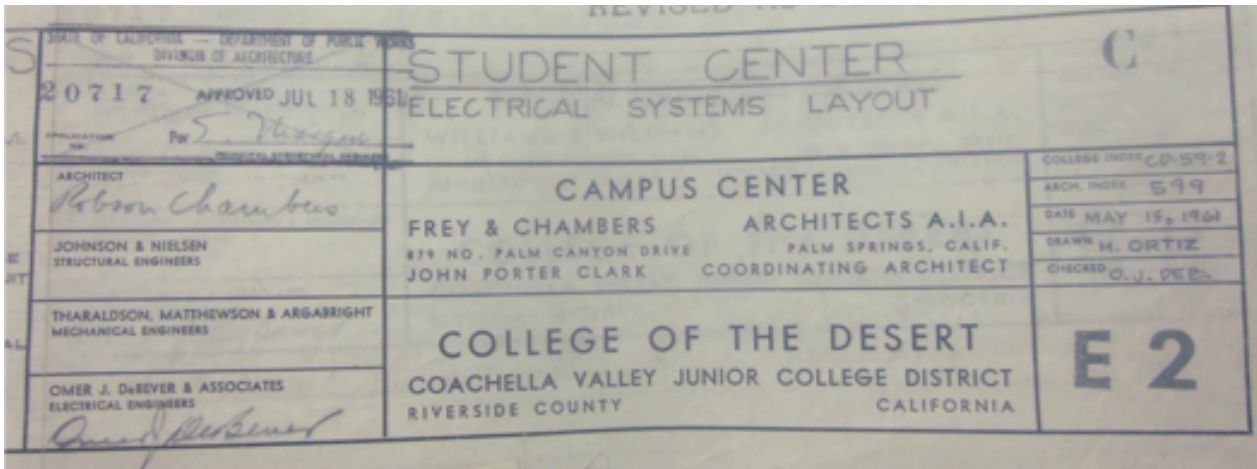


The Kocher-Sampson building as it appeared shortly after construction in 1934.

The house had its own well and electric power. The chimney and fireplace were made of adobe. He drove the open road from Palm Desert to Palm Springs every day in his 1932 Ford convertible.

From 1934 to 1937, Frey worked directly with John Porter Clark. They subsequently collaborated for over 20 years although not in the same firm.

Clark became the managing architect for the College of the Desert (under master planner and design architect, John Warneke). Frey's firm, Chambers and Frey, worked directly under Clark beginning in 1958 designing several key buildings, including the campus center which still stands.



Drawing: College of the Desert Archives

# CHESTER MOORTEN, LANDSCAPE DESIGN



Photo: [moortenbotanicalgarden.com](http://moortenbotanicalgarden.com)

The original landscaping was done by Chester "Cactus Slim" Moorten of Moorten's Botanical Gardens in Palm Springs.

Cactus Slim began his career in Hollywood where he was an original Keystone Cop and a stand-in for Howard Hughes. He developed tuberculosis on a film set and went to recover near Joshua Tree where he panned for gold and collected beautiful cacti. Moorten moved to Palm Springs in 1938 and bought property from renowned nature and desert photographer, Stephen Willard (now Moorten's Botanical Gardens, 1701 South Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Springs). The business grew to include landscape design and soon Slim and his wife, Patricia, were hired to create desert landscapes for the homes of Walt Disney, Red Skelton, Jimmy Van Heusen, Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby and others. (Source: [www.moortenbotanicalgarden.com](http://www.moortenbotanicalgarden.com) )



Image: Twentieth Century Studios

## COLONEL JASON S. JOY

Jason S Joy was a Colonel in the US Army General Staff prior to joining the American Red Cross in 1920 as Executive Secretary. In 1922, he became the Director of Public Relations for the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America. In 1926 he became the Director of Studio Relations with the American Motion Pictures Producers.

In 1929, a Catholic layman, who was also editor of the prominent trade paper, Motion Picture Herald, and a Jesuit priest created a code of standards for motion pictures which they submitted to the major Hollywood studios. They were concerned with the effects of sound film on children, whom they considered especially susceptible to their allure. In February 1930, several studio heads—including Irving Thalberg of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) agreed to the stipulations of the Code as a means to avoid direct government intervention. It was the responsibility of the Studio Relations Committee, headed by Colonel Jason S. Joy, to supervise film production and advise the studios when changes or cuts were required.

In September 1932, he became an executive and Scenario editor at Fox, although he continued to work with the Studio Relations Committee for most of 1933. In 1935, he became Twentieth Century-Fox's director of public relations.

DECEMBER 13, 2021



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