

The Alvah and Teresa Hicks Residence, 1926

Alvah Hicks, Builder

701 North Patencio Road, Palm Springs, California, 92262

Nomination Application for

City of Palm Springs

Class 1 Historic Resource



Prepared by

Steven Keylon

For the

Palm Springs Preservation Foundation

FINAL March 27, 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank
the following individuals and organizations for
their professional expertise and/or editing assistance:

Tracy Conrad; Barbara Marshall; Jade Thomas Nelson.

Special thanks to Ron DUBY, copy editor.

CLASS 1 HISTORIC RESOURCE NOMINATION

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INTRODUCTION

The Palm Springs Preservation Foundation (PSPF) is a non-profit organization whose mission is “to educate and promote public awareness of the importance of preserving the historical resources and architecture of the city of Palm Springs and the Coachella Valley area.” In June 2021, the PSPF board of directors assigned the task of writing the Hicks Residence Class 1 Historic Resource nomination to Steven Keylon.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SIGNIFICANCE:

The residence of Palm Springs pioneers Alvah and Teresa Hicks, located at 701 North Patencio Road in Palm Springs, was built in 1926. The residence was built as a spec house by master carpenter and early real estate developer Alvah F. Hicks, and his family lived in the home while constructing another, as was his custom at the time. It is an important example of a custom Spanish Colonial Revival structure, in one of the earliest tracts developed in the small resort village. The home was later expanded and remodeled by the internationally significant diplomat, philanthropist, and Arabist Charles R. Crane and his wife Cornelia. Those changes were built by William Marte and Hans Lauritz Hansen, noted contractors and Palm Springs pioneers. The home exhibits numerous stylistic features that place it within the historic context of the period “Palm Springs Between the Wars (1919-1941)” as defined in the Citywide Historic Context Statement & Survey Findings created by Historic Resources Group. This was when wealthy and influential people were building second homes in the growing and increasingly well-known resort village. Though contemporary in function, most of these homes were typically built in Mediterranean-Revival styles meant to evoke a feeling of Old California.

The period of significance for the Hicks Residence is 1926 through 1936. The Hicks family owned the house until 1929, when it was sold to sisters Anna and Elizabeth Trischman, who subsequently sold it to Beatrice B. R. Moore in 1931.

Mrs. Moore sold the house in 1935 to diplomat Charles R. Crane and his wife Cornelia. The Cranes added two guest bedrooms and bath on one side of the house, and converted the existing garage into more guest rooms, adding an observation tower. A new detached garage was also added in 1936. Charles R. Crane died in the house in February 1939, and his wife Cornelia’s estate sold the house in 1943. Their association with the house, and the changes made during their ownership, established this period of significance.

DESIGNATION CRITERIA:

Criteria for the Designation of a Class 1 Historic Resource: Pursuant to the Palm Springs Municipal Code (PSMC) Section 8.05.070.C.1.: A site, structure, building or object may be designated as a Class 1 historic

resource, provided one or more of the criteria in subsections “a” and “b” are met. Refer to the U.S. Department of the Interior National Register Bulletin “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation” of potentially historic resources for further information.

As outlined in the analysis beginning on page 45, the Hicks Residence qualifies as a City of Palm Springs Class 1 historic resource.

The house and grounds possess good historic significance and meet the following three of seven of the eligibility criteria outlined in Municipal Code Section 8.05.070.C.1.a: (ii) Association with persons of significance who made a meaningful contribution to local Palm Springs history (Alvah F. Hicks), as well as internationally (Charles R. Crane); (iii) Exemplifies a particular period in local history; and (v) Presents the work of a master architect, landscape architect and interior designer, each whose individual genius influenced their age (i.e., peers, profession), and possesses high artistic value.

Furthermore, the site possesses a good degree of historic integrity as outlined in Municipal Code Section 8.05.070.C.1.b in terms of Design, Materials, Workmanship, Location, Setting, Feeling, and Association.

The historic context within which the Hicks Residence was evaluated as outlined in the Citywide Historic Context Statement & Survey Findings is “Palm Springs Between the Wars (1919-1941).” Its period of significance is associated with the timeframe in which Alvah Hicks built and owned the property, living there with his family. Significant subsequent owners, Charles and Cornelia Crane made sensitive additions in 1936.

Statement of Significance

Summary

The Hicks Residence was built in 1926 by master builder Alvah Hicks as a spec house for himself and his family, and is one of the first homes built in what is now known as the Old Las Palmas neighborhood. The home was expanded in 1936 by contractors Marte-Hansen for diplomat Charles R. Crane and his wife Cornelia.

Location

The Hicks Residence is located at 701 North Patencio Road, Palm Springs, California, 92262.

Chain of Title

Note: The chain of title information from 1926 is unavailable. Title records begin with the sale in 1929 from Alvah and Teresa Hicks to Anna Trischman Pryor and her sister Elizabeth Trischman.

Primary sources show the chain of ownership for the Hicks Residence (Lot 49 of Merito Vista, as shown by map on File in book 12, page 94 of maps, records of Riverside County, California):

- 12-26-29 **A. F. Hicks and Teresa A. Hicks**, his wife, as joint tenants, to **Anna Trischman Pryor**, a married woman, and **Elizabeth Trischman**, a single woman.
- 3-16-31 **Anna Trischman Pryor**, unmarried woman, and **Elizabeth Trischman**, a single woman, to **Beatrice B.R. Moore**, as her separate property.
- 9-16-35 **Beatrice B.R. Moore**, a married woman, to **Cornelia S. Crane**, a married woman.
- 9-30-43 John C. Crane and Lawrason Riggs, as executors of the last will of **Cornelia S. Crane**, deceased, to **Ruth W. Morrison**, a married woman.
- 3-17-69 John M. Wood, administrator of the estate of Ruthyn C. Wood, aka **Ruthyn Morrison Wood**, to **H. James Hicks** and **Carole S. Hicks**, husband and wife, as joint tenants.
- 3-20-90 **H. James Hicks, Jr.** and **Carole S. Hicks**, husband and wife, as joint tenants, to Harold James Hicks, Jr. and Carole Lou Hicks, Trustees of the **Hicks Family Trust**.
- 10-04-02 Harold James Hicks, Jr. trustee and Carole Lou Hicks, trustees of the **Hicks Family Trust** to **Carol Scarioni**, an unmarried woman.
- 1-30-07 **Carol J. Scarioni**, an unmarried woman, to **Toni D. Anderson**, a married woman as her sole and separate property.
- 10-31-07 **Toni D. Anderson**, a married woman, as her sole and separate property, to Toni Dee Anderson, as Trustee of the **Toni Anderson Separate Property Trust**.
- 1-07-11 Sold at public auction in foreclosure to Matt Perkins, **Hilltop Family Development Inc., Kellyco Development Inc.**/Tenants in Common.
- 3-16-11 Matt Perkins, **Hilltop Family Development, Inc., Kellyco Development, Inc.** as Tenants in Common, to **James D. Fielding**, an unmarried man.
- 3-19-11 **James D. Fielding**, an unmarried man, to **The James D. Fielding Trust Dated February 15, 2013**.
- 5-12-18 James D. Fielding, Trustee of **The James D. Fielding Trust Dated February 15, 2013**, to Edison Briones, Trustee, or successors in trust, under the **Edison Briones Living Trust dated May 12, 2018**.
- 8-15-18 James D. Fielding, Trustee of **The James D. Fielding Trust dated February 15, 2013**, and Edison Briones, Trustee under the **Edison Briones Living Trust dated May 12, 2018**, to **Kevin L. Palmer and Joseph Thomas Ellicott, Jr.**, who are married to each other as joint tenants.
- 10-14-18 **Kevin L. Palmer and Joseph Thomas Ellicott, Jr.** who are married to each other to **Kevin L. Palmer**, Trustee of the **Kevin L. Palmer Living Trust dated July 6, 2017** as to an undivided 50% interest and **Joseph Thomas Ellicott, Jr.**, Trustee of the **Joseph Thomas Ellicott, Jr. Revocable Trust** dated July 6, 2017 as to an undivided 50% interest.



CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

Department of Planning Services

3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs, CA 92262

Phone 760 323 8245

Fax 760 322 8360

Historic Preservation Officer 760 322 8364 x8786

HISTORIC RESOURCE DESIGNATION (HRD)

WHEN TO USE THIS APPLICATION:

Use this application if you are seeking historic designation for a property, parcel or historic district.

For alterations to Class 1, Class 2, or contributing sites in a Historic District, use the CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS application. (C of A)

For alterations or demolition of Class 3, Class 4 or non-contributing sites in a Historic District use the MINOR ARCHITECTURAL APPLICATION (MAA).

(Contact the Planning Department if you are unsure of the classification of your property.)

WHO MAY APPLY:

Any individual or organization may apply to the City for consideration of a request for historic designation, however applications must be signed and notarized by the owner(s) of record of the site, structure, building or object for which the designation is sought. For Historic Districts written signatures from at least 51% of the property owners in the proposed district must be included in the application.

PROCEDURE:

1. For proposed historic sites or resources: Refer to Palm Springs Municipal Code ("PSMC") Section 8.05.070 for *Procedures and Criteria for the Designation of Class 1 and Class 2 Historic Resources*. ([www.palmspringsca.gov / government / departments / planning / municipal code / title 8 / section 8.05 "Historic Preservation"](http://www.palmspringsca.gov/government/departments/planning/municipal_code/title_8/section_8.05_Historic_Preservation)).
2. For proposed historic districts: Refer to Municipal Code Section 8.05.090 for *Procedures and Criteria for Designation of Historic Districts*. ([www.palmspringsca.gov / government / departments / planning / municipal code / title 8 / section 8.05 "Historic Preservation"](http://www.palmspringsca.gov/government/departments/planning/municipal_code/title_8/section_8.05_Historic_Preservation)).
3. Complete all parts of the application and include related reports, mailing labels and back up information in support of the application. Denote "NA" for any line item that is "not applicable".
4. Prior to submittal of the application, contact the City's Historic Preservation Officer ("HPO") to review the application for conformance and completeness.
5. Submit the completed application and related materials to the Department of Planning Services. A Planning Department case number will be assigned to the application.
6. Applications for historic site / resource or historic district designation are evaluated by City staff who will prepare the application for consideration by the City's Historic Site Preservation Board ("HSPB") at a noticed public hearing. Applicants should plan on attending the hearing. City staff will schedule site visits for members of the HSPB to become familiar with the site prior to the public hearing. (Exterior review only, interiors are not subject to HSPB review.)
7. At the public hearing, the HSPB will evaluate the application and make a recommendation for City Council action. The City Council will consider the application and the HSPB's recommendation at a second noticed public hearing. The applicant should again attend that hearing.
8. The final action of the City Council to designate will be recorded on the property title with the County Recorder's office.

**CITY OF PALM SPRINGS
PLANNING DEPARTMENT APPLICATION
HISTORIC RESOURCE DESIGNATION**

CLASS 1 AND CLASS 2

APPLICANT'S REQUIRED MATERIAL CHECKLIST

The following items must be submitted before a **Historic Resource Designation** application will be accepted. Please check off each item to assure completeness. Provide twelve (12) hard copies and one (1) PDF copy of the following materials unless otherwise noted:

	Applicant Only	City Use Only
Application Information:		
• General Information form (1 copy)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Notarized letter from property owner consenting to Historic Designation (1 copy)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Ownership and Address History ("Chain of Title") (1 copy)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Historic Resource Report:		
The following items shall be included in a historic resources report describing the site, structure, buildings, or objects eligible and appropriate for designation per PSMC 8.05.070.		
• Photographs of the exterior of the proposed site, structure, buildings or objects.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Aerial photo of the site/resource (from Google Maps or equal).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Information on the architect, designer, and/or developer.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Date and method of construction. Provide copies of building permits.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• A detailed assessment of the character defining features describing materials, architectural details/style, landscape elements, or other relevant descriptors.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Evaluation of the site relative to the Criteria and Findings for Designation of Class 1 and Class 2 Historic Resources.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Additional Information:		
• Site Plan: 8-12" x 11" or 11" x 17"	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Public Hearing labels per PSZC Section 94.09.00.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Any other documentation or research as may be necessary to determine the qualifications of the site, structure, building, or objects.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Applicants are encouraged to review the bulletin from the U.S. Department of the Interior titled "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation". (National Register Bulletin 15 (<http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/>)).



(to be completed by Planning staff.)

Date:
Case No.
HSPB No.
Planner:

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS
Department of Planning Services

HISTORIC RESOURCE DESIGNATION (HRD)

TO THE APPLICANT:

Complete all parts of this application. Denote "NA" for lines that are not applicable.
Submit the completed application with attachments to the Department of Planning Services at
3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs, CA 92262 Phone: 760-323-8245 Fax: 760-322-8380

This application is for a proposed: (Check one) Historic Site / Resource Historic District:

Applicant's Name: TOM ELLICOTT AND KEVIN PALMER

Please Print

Owner Lessee Authorized Agent City Other

Applicant's Address: TOM ELLICOTT AND KEVIN PALMER

Number and Street Name or P.O. Box

701 NORTH PATENCIO ROAD

PALM SPRINGS, CA

92262

City

State

ZIP

Telephone Nos: (404) 435-8974

Residence

Cell

Work

E-Mail address: kevinpalmerphp@gmail.com

Note: For Historic District applications: On a separate page, provide a list all sites / parcels within the proposed historic district boundaries with the following information provided for each parcel / APN.

Site Address: 701 NORTH PATENCIO ROAD, PALM SPRINGS, CA 92262

APN 505-291-005-5 Zone: _____ Section: _____ Gen'l Plan Land Use Desig. _____

Is the project is located on the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians Reservation? NO
(Refer to the Land Status Map under Tribal Resources on the Planning Department home page.)

Construction Date: 1926 - HRG SURVEY Estimated Actual (denote source, i.e. bldg. permits)

Architect: UNKNOWN

Builder: ALVAH HICKS; MARTE-HANSEN

Present Owner: TOM ELLICOTT AND KEVIN PALMER

Present Owner Address: SAME

Original Owner: ALVAH AND TERESA HICKS

Other notable past owners: CHARLES AND CORNELIA CRANE

Other Historic Associations: N/A

Common Name of Property: N/A

Historic Name of Property: VILLA CORNELIA (1935-1943)

Attach to this application any information, photos, drawings, newspaper articles, reports, studies, or other materials to fully describe the characteristics or conditions that support this application for historic designation.

Architectural Style: SPANISH COLONIAL-REVIVAL
(Refer to the Architectural Styles chapter of the Citywide Historic Context Statement, under Historic Resources on the Planning Home page (www.palmspringsca.gov).

Period of Significance: 1928-1938
(See the Citywide Historic Context Statement Document.)

Please list any informational reference sources used to complete this application:

PSMC 8.05.070 (C,1): Criteria for the Designation of Class 1 Historic Resources.

A site, structure, building or object may be designated as a Class 1 historic resource or a Contributing Resource in a proposed historic district by the Palm Springs City Council, provided both of the following findings are met.

Provide a written description of how the site qualifies as historic resource under one or more of the following criterion:

FINDING 1: The site, structure, building or object exhibits exceptional historic significance and meets one or more of the criteria listed below:

- i. The resource is associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the nation, state or community.¹
- ii. The resource is associated with the lives of persons who made a meaningful contribution to national, state or local history.
- iii. The resource reflects or exemplifies a particular period of national, state or local history.
- iv. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type of construction, a period of construction or a method of construction.²
- v. The resource presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age, or that possesses high artistic value.
- vi. The resource represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction, as used in evaluating applications for designation of historic districts, for parcels on which more than one entity exists.
- vii. The resource has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to national, state or local history or prehistory.

¹ NOTE: Unlike the National Register criteria, The City's criterion does not consider "patterns of events". For consideration of "patterns of events", use Criterion "iii", reflecting a particular period.

² Unlike the National Register criteria "type, period of method of construction relates to construction only" For design theme or characteristics use Criterion "iii" (period) or Criterion v (high artistic value).



Alvah Hicks photograph during construction of the Kellogg Residence. Courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society.

The First Owner: Developer/Builder – Alvah F. Hicks

The builder and first owner of the Hicks Residence, Alvah Hicks, was also one of the developers of the subdivision in which it was built. One of Palm Springs' most significant early pioneers, Hicks achieved extraordinary importance in his adopted town during his lifetime – first as a skilled contractor with a reputation for quality work. Hard-working and opportunistic, he soon found success as a real estate developer, owner of the largest builder's supply store, and president of his own water company. He was also on the first City Council after Palm Springs was incorporated in 1938. Alvah Hicks continued to be known through successive generations

of his family, who long resided in Palm Springs and made their own marks on the town. One of them, grandson Jim Hicks, was a later longtime owner of the Hicks Residence.

EARLY LIFE

Alvah Fayette Hicks was born in Middleton, Pennsylvania, on January 9, 1884, to James and Hannah Hicks. After moving to New York as a young man, Alvah Hicks became a master carpenter involved in the building of houses. By 1910 Hicks was living in Queens, New York, with his wife Teresa (née Gillen, 1884-1942) and son Harold (1909-1997).

While Hicks was in New York, he read an article about Southern California, which described year-round sunshine with photographs of orange groves. Intrigued, he moved his family to Los Angeles, where they rented a duplex. The neighbor in the adjoining unit told Hicks about homestead opportunities in Desert Hot Springs, so in 1913, Hicks filed for his first 160-acre homestead. He built a small 14' x 26' foot house.¹ In 1914, their second son Milton (known as "Milt") was born.²

In a 1986 oral history interview, Harold Hicks recalled that he, his mother, and his brother would strap empty five-gallon cans to their burro and ride five miles to get to the nearest water source. After filling the cans, which would last about a week, they rode back five miles. The lack of water ultimately pushed the Hicks family to move into the village of Palm Springs in 1917. Hicks was able to find steady work as a carpenter in Palm Springs, and over the years, bought substantial amounts of land from the Southern Pacific Railroad, at \$5.00 per acre. He would soon begin to sell large parcels of land for development at an enormous profit.



Hicks family on their homestead, ca 1917. Courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society.

¹ "Prickly Pears," interview with Harold Hicks, July 11, 1986. Palm Springs Library. According to Renee Brown, the Hicks homestead was located near what is now the intersection of Pierson Boulevard and Indian Canyon Drive in the city of Desert Hot Springs.

² Ibid.

PALM SPRINGS IN THE TEENS: AN INFLUX OF PIONEERS

The Palm Springs that the Hicks family moved to was a very sleepy little town. Nellie Coffman had opened the Desert Inn in 1909 with an acre of land and a small stone house, which they rented out to guests. Nellie, her doctor husband, and two sons put up small tents for their own use. Over time, they bought more land and tents, and the Desert Inn became a well-known respite for respiratory patients. As Melba Bennett would later recall, "In a letter written from the Desert Inn and dated as of January 1914, Fanny Stevenson (widow of Robert Louis Stevenson) wrote to a friend that she paid \$20.00 per week for board and room. In describing Palm Springs at this time, she wrote '...It is a little oasis on the Colorado desert, some seven miles over the border. There are a few palms here, and one hot spring to account for the name. There is, also, a climate of extraordinary pureness and dryness, and almost no rain or wind . . . There are very few people here except patients, and perhaps an old prospector or two; everything is very simple and plain, but the food is excellent, and the "tent-houses" in which the patients live, are as comfortable as one could wish..."

The same year the Hicks family arrived in the desert, 1913, several other people would also arrive who would positively shape the future of the small resort village. Melba Bennett, writing about the town's early history in 1955, wrote, "The year 1913 certainly was a lucky one for Palm Springs as it brought not only good citizens who contributed heavily to the development of the town, but permanent ones. They and their children continue to guide the progress of the town." These included the White sisters – Florilla, Cornelia, and Isabel, who in 1914 bought the Palm Springs Hotel. "They searched out the desert and the canyons and became authorities on the flora and fauna. Some of my happiest early experiences on the desert were riding the trails with Doctor White and Earl Coffman. We never passed a tree or shrub or cactus that the name wasn't called out to me, and to what use it was put by the Indians. When the Whites first lived here, the burros and Indian cattle would lean over the fence and eat the figs. The horses would rub their backs against the house and nearly shake it down."³

When Zaddie and Ed Bunker arrived in 1913 with their daughter Frances, they opened the first garage, living in a tent for two years on an acre alfalfa field where the Plaza Theatre stands today. According to Bennett, "Zaddie still owns this property and much more, acquired through the years. Zaddie says there were about 25 white people and 50 friendly Indians who made up the population of the village when they arrived."⁴

"This same year brought Carl and Edith Lykken to Palm Springs. Carl worked for a few years at Blanchard's Feed Store, but in 1916 he bought some property from Doctor White and built the first Department Store, called Lykken's."⁵

Bennett continued, "The man who furnished the land on which the nationally famous El Mirador Hotel was built, P. T. Stevens, also arrived that year. He rented a house from Mrs. Crocker who owned the property on the north side of the Desert Inn. Stevens later built near the present location of the Desert Inn swimming

³ "The History of Palm Springs," *The Palm Springs Story*, by Melba White, Palm Springs Chamber of Commerce, 1955, 11.

⁴ *Ibid*, 12.

⁵ *Ibid*, 12.

pool and added a stable for his daughter Sallie's pony. Sallie is now Mrs. Culver Nichols and both she and her husband contribute time and effort towards the needs of the community.”⁶

About Alvah Hicks, Bennett recalled, “About this time it was obvious that Palm Springs was badly in need of their own carpenter, so Mr. Stevens persuaded Alvah Hicks to move his family from his homestead north of the 8 Palms railroad station to Palm Springs. Zaddie Bunker immediately got him the job of building the Birge house on property she had acquired and sold to them. This home is now the famous Ingleside Inn, operated so successfully by Mrs. Ruth Hardy, our first and only Councilwoman. Hicks also purchased twenty acres of land known as Las Palmas Estates, which he subdivided, and built homes for speculation. Soon Hicks had formed the Palm Springs Water Company and the Builders' Supply Company, both of which are still operating under the direction of his two sons, Harold and Milton.”⁷

If 1913 saw an influx of people who would shape the future of Palm Springs, the year 1914 irrevocably set the course forward. It was in 1914 that Nellie and Harry Coffman divorced, and Nellie began turning her Desert Inn into a world-class resort, away from a respiratory resort. During the war, wealthy people who would have typically gone to Europe discovered the peaceful qualities of Nellie Coffman's new more upscale resort, which Coffman described as her four “S's”—space, stillness, solitude, and simplicity.

Also in 1914, Pearl McCallum's mother Emily died, leaving Pearl the family's extensive property in the desert, which, by then, was said to have been worth only \$6,500. Fortunately, Pearl married Austin McManus that same year. He was a Pasadena real estate agent. As Renee Brown writes, “Together, they opened up Pioneer Realty with her as president and he as secretary of the company. They were opposites in their business dealings. She was inflexible and stern in negotiations and he was jovial with his upbeat Irish charisma. He brought in the customers, and she negotiated the deals. Together they created a real estate dynasty. She insisted on making the deeds to her properties reversible for architectural reasons, putting restrictive covenants on the use of the land she sold.”⁸

Electricity also made its way to Palm Springs in 1914, and the first paved road was added in 1916. The momentum forward was stalled temporarily by the advent of the Great War, but it would soon pick up upon the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, marking the war's end.

⁶ Ibid, 12.

⁷ Ibid, 12.

⁸ “Pearl McCallum McManus helped shape Palm Springs,” *Desert Sun*, April 29, 2016.



Indian Boulevard and the Spa, circa 1925.

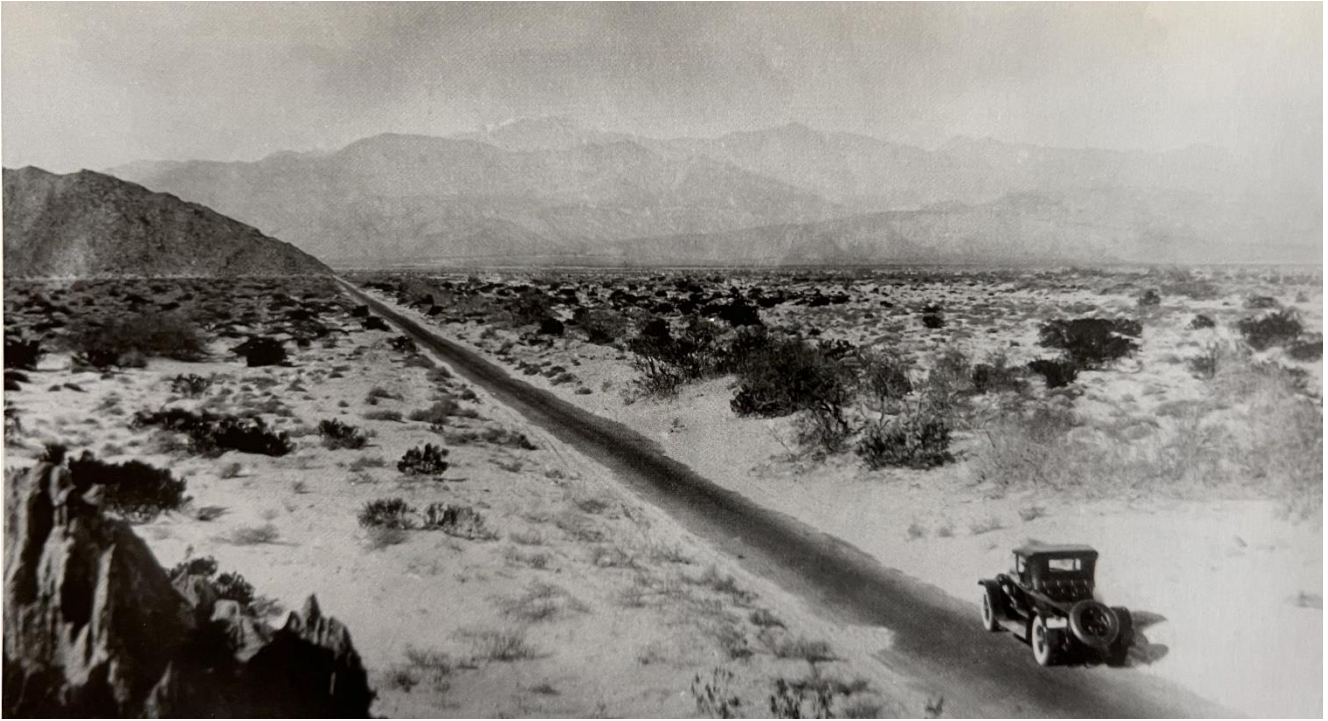
THE NINETEEN-TWENTIES: THE FIRST GREAT DEVELOPMENT BOOM

After the end of the Great War, Nellie's sons returned to help her build her dream of a proper resort hotel with all the amenities. Not to be outdone, Pearl hired Lloyd Wright to design the Oasis Hotel, and the upgrade of the sleepy village in the 1920s had begun.

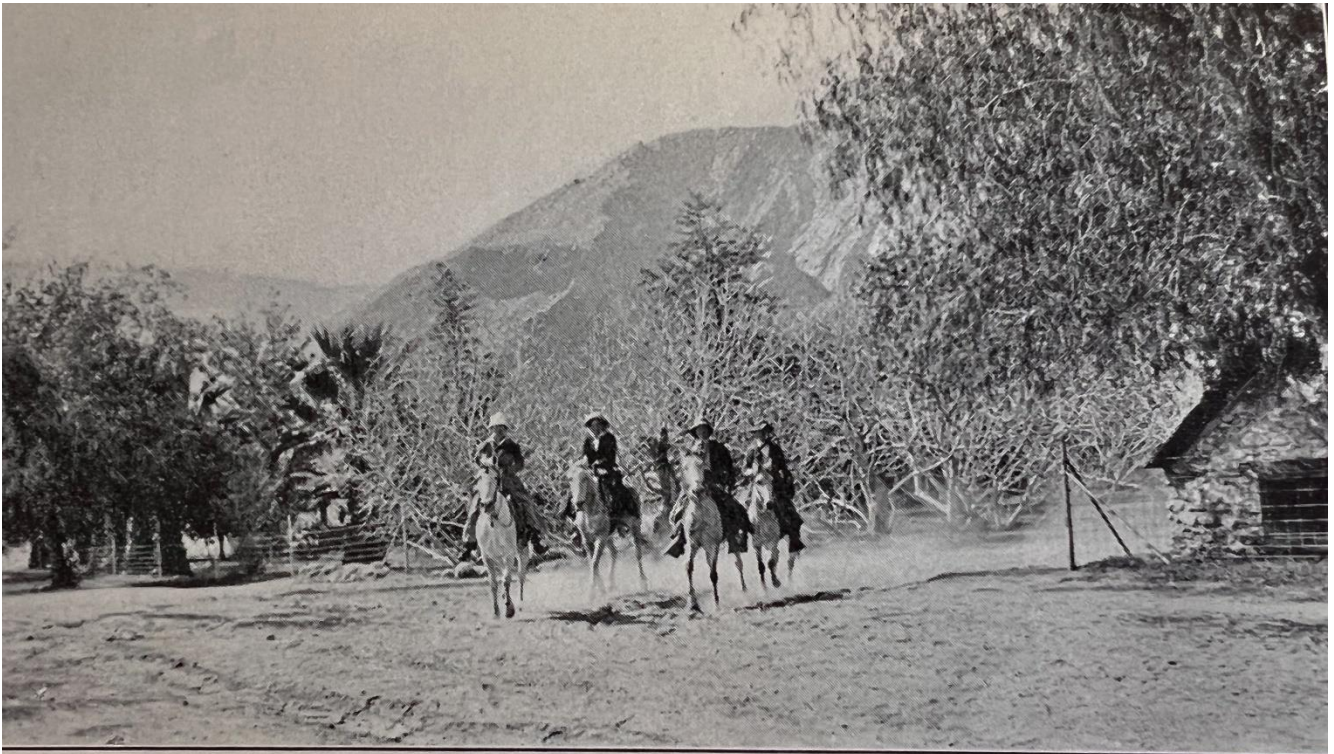
The postwar building boom also included residences. In 1921, the *Banning Record* reported that Alvah Hicks was building a home in Palm Springs, and that "the building of homes at Palm Springs continues steadily and new places are being erected for half a dozen different winter residents there." The article mentions homes built by Zaddie Bunker's father E. Dawson, and another for Mrs. Palmer, on land purchased from Zaddie Bunker.⁹ It was also reported in 1921 that Hicks had just completed a "\$45,000 house for Mrs. M. L. Kellogg," of the "Kellogg cornflake family" from Chicago, before going to Big Bear for the summer to build several more homes.¹⁰

⁹ "Building Going Up at the Springs," *Banning Record*, March 3, 1921, 1.

¹⁰ *San Bernardino Daily Sun*, June 26, 1921, 1.



The single-lane road leading to Palm Springs, 1921.



OFF FOR THE CAÑON

In the early 1920s, the only paved road was Palm Canyon Drive, and the paving stopped at the Desert Inn. A typical street was sandy dirt, lined by mature shade trees.



This home is located in beautiful
Las Palmas Estates.

FOR RENT or SALE your inquiry
will receive an immediate answer.
Drive Through

Little Tuscany
and

Las Palmas Estates

HAROLD J. HICKS

Box 249—Sales Agent

Palm Springs Builders' Supply Co.

The charming and typically desert winter colony hacienda pictured above was built entirely of material purchased from the Palm Springs Builders' Supply which has served Palm Springs home owners and contractors since 1926.

Buy building material and all supplies locally and they HAVE to be RIGHT.

Hollow Tile . . . Lumber . . . Portland Cement, Etc.

*You sense it well being in Palm Springs
is closely linked with your home.
— Buy it carefully for comfort,
secure property values,
desirable location.
H. J. H.*

In this 1937 advertisement for Palm Springs Builders' Supply, Alvah Hicks' hardware and lumber store, is a photograph showing one of the Spanish Colonial Revival homes built by Hicks in Las Palmas Estates. Shown is one of his typical designs, with squared masonry supports, a red-tiled roof, and an observation tower, all features present in the Hicks Residence – though the observation tower was added in 1936. This shows how the 1936 modifications are still in keeping with the Alvah Hicks style.

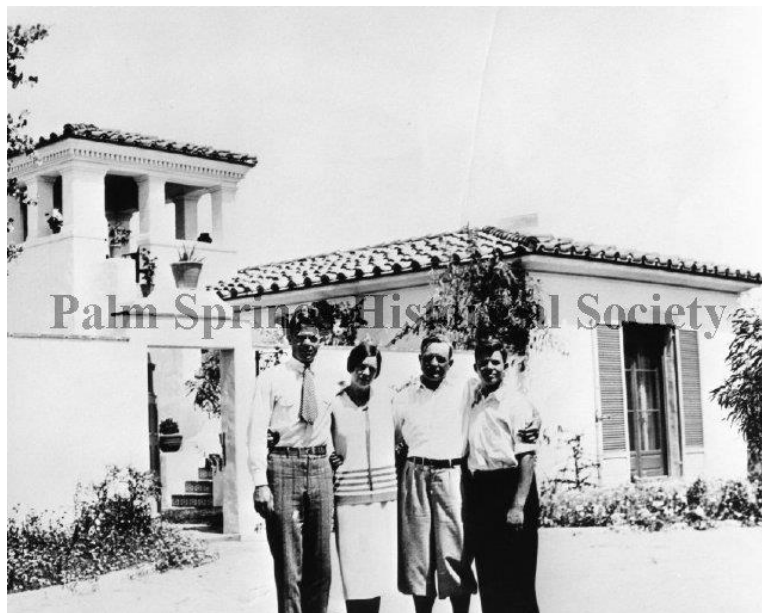
The expanding village had very few skilled contractors, so the industrious and hard-working Alvah Hicks developed a successful contracting business and was soon highly regarded with a reputation for quality work. Beginning in 1922, Hicks built a dozen of the Spanish Colonial Revival-style buildings for Nellie Coffman when she began upgrading the Desert Inn. In addition to the ongoing construction at the Desert Inn, Hicks also built homes for Coffman's sons George Roberson (now Le Vallauris Restaurant), and Owen Coffman (now demolished). He also built homes for oilman Thomas O'Donnell, and for Carrie Birge, the widow of Buffalo millionaire automobile [manufacturer] Humphrey Birge, now the Ingleside Inn. (\$45,000). The design of all of these is attributed to "architectural artist" William Charles Tanner.

Hicks found fine artisans with whom to work, one of them was his head carpenter, R. Lee Miller, another talented builder who would go on to build the famous rock houses. Even though Hicks had no formal training in architecture, by absorbing what Tanner had designed for Coffman, and by observing other local vernacular architecture, and presumably through the use of the architectural pattern books that were widely published at the time, he began creating accurately detailed Spanish, Mexican, and Mediterranean-inspired residences when the new tracts soon began to open. Hicks' son Harold said in a 1967 oral history that his father was "...a very good businessman...who came out here with very little. He got by with his ability as a home builder. It helped

that he was the only man in the area who had all the equipment needed for home construction. His gasoline-motor cement mixer and scaffolding helped him build many homes that still stand in Palm Springs.”

By February 1923, a headline in the *Banning Record* announced, “WATCH PALM SPRINGS GROW: Desert Town Growth is Amazing.” The article stated, “Travelers who return to the oasis these days can scarcely believe their eyes when they behold the young city in the making, where once a drowsy, sleepy outpost in the desert dotted the map of Southern California. There is nothing indefinite about the present and the future of Palm Springs. The present building boom is right at hand, and the hee-haw of the Palm Springs donkey vies with the music of the carpenter’s hammer and saw. Buildings are in the course of construction in various parts of the town, some of the very best running into many thousands of dollars. It is doubtful whether any town in the West, outside of the oil belt or gold strike class, can claim a building record to equal that of Palm Springs this season.”¹¹

Seeing the opportunity, a few visionary real estate developers began subdividing land north, south, and east of the Desert Inn. Starting in January 1923, a residential boom began that would change the face of the tiny resort village, a boom until the bust of 1929. Even that wasn’t felt as deeply in Palm Springs as it was everywhere else. Alvah Hicks was prominent in the creation of these earliest residential tracts. Not only did he build the custom homes, he also, in many cases, sold the land to the developers who subdivided the parcels, and in the process, made a lot of money. According to Hicks’ grandson Dennis Hicks, Alvah Hicks would build a spec house, and move into it with his family, and then design and build another. Once that house was done, they would move into the new house and sell the existing one. Hicks repeated this process several times, including with the house at 701 Patencio.¹²



Harold, Teresa, Alvah, and Milton Hicks at Villa Teresa, circa 1930. Courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society.

¹¹ “Watch Palm Springs Grow,” *Banning Record*, February 23, 1923, 7.

¹² Telephone interview with Dennis Hicks, January 4, 2023.

In 1930, Hicks built a Spanish Colonial Revival home in the Vista Acres tract at 501 North Belardo. To honor his wife, the house was named “Villa Teresa.” After the family sold the house in 1936, Hicks commissioned a new “Bermuda Style” house by architects Brewster & Benedict at 404 Camino del Sur. As the *Desert Sun* reported, “Architects Brewster and Benedict are now preparing drawings for the residence. It will contain three bedrooms and three baths, a study, library, living room, dining room, sunroom and other attractive features. The home will be constructed of the new type, 12-inch by 24-inch hollow tile.”¹³

PALM SPRINGS WATER COMPANY

Even more than Hicks’ mastery as a carpenter, and builder of Palm Springs’ earliest residences and hotels, or his pioneering subdivisions, was Hicks’ involvement in the importation of water to the growing village. It all began after Hicks had finished construction on Thomas O’Donnell’s *Ojo del Desierto* high above the newly constructed Desert Inn. As told by Tracy Conrad, “when he moved in following a honeymoon stay at the Willard Hotel in Washington, D.C., the newlywed found the water pressure to be inadequate. Complaining to the water company proved fruitless, so O’Donnell encouraged local builder Alvah Hicks to buy it and improve conditions for customers, starting with him and his house on the hill.”¹⁴

Harold Hicks, Alvah’s son, recalled that his father, “... didn’t have a great deal of money, but he had an admirer in Mr. Tom O’Donnell. My father built his house, and he was very much attracted to my father. ... O’Donnell said ‘Why don’t you buy the water company and get everything squared away?’ My father said ‘That’s a good idea, but I don’t have any money.’” O’Donnell financed Hicks’ purchase of the Whitewater Mutual Water Co. from PT Stevens.¹⁵ Hicks added to this with the acquisition of additional water from the upper slopes of San Jacinto at Snow and Fall Creeks. Hicks reorganized the company, renaming it the Palm Springs Water Company. With Hicks’ improvements, the small town’s water pressure improved and there was a guarantee that future development would have a steady supply of clean water.

With Hicks’ improvements, the small town’s water pressure improved and there was a guarantee that future development would have a steady supply of clean water.

Alvah Hicks ran the Palm Springs Water Company until he died in 1944, when the management of it passed to his eldest son, Harold.

Hicks also opened Palm Springs Builders’ Supply, a hardware store and lumber company that is still serving the Palm Springs community today.

¹³ *Desert Sun*, December 18, 1936, 8.

¹⁴ “Water in the Desert,” by Tracy Conrad. *Desert Magazine*, Summer 2013, 20.

¹⁵ “Men on the Forefront,” *Palm Springs Life*, digital article by Ann Greer, accessed March 14, 2023:

<https://www.palmspringslife.com/men-on-the-forefront/>

LATER YEARS

In 1932 Hicks sold fifty-three acres of land in the north end of Palm Springs, selling it to Ralph Bellamy and Charlie Farrell for only \$3,000. The actors sold off the forty acres they didn't need for \$7,000, which helped fund a pool and clubhouse for their new Racquet Club.

Hicks became a prominent civic leader who served on Palm Springs' first City Council and was involved with the village's incorporation in 1938. Hicks developed the Little Tuscany Estates neighborhood in the Chino Canyon area in the late 1930s, a development valued for its spectacular views and minimal intrusion on the landscape.

Teresa and Alvah Hicks divorced in 1940. She died just two years later. Alvah later remarried a woman named Jane and moved to Banning. After an operation at Riverside Community Hospital, he died on March 3, 1944.



Palm Springs' first City Council, 1938: From left: Frank "Pop" Shannon, Dr. Bacon Clifton, Mayor Phil Boyd, Alvah Hicks, John W. Williams, Austin McManus, and Robert Murray. Courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society.



A SHADY LANE AT PALM SPRINGS

In J. Smeaton Chase's book *"Our Araby,"* he describes the sleepy village with its palm and California pepper-lined dirt roads.

The Tract: Merito Vista (1925)

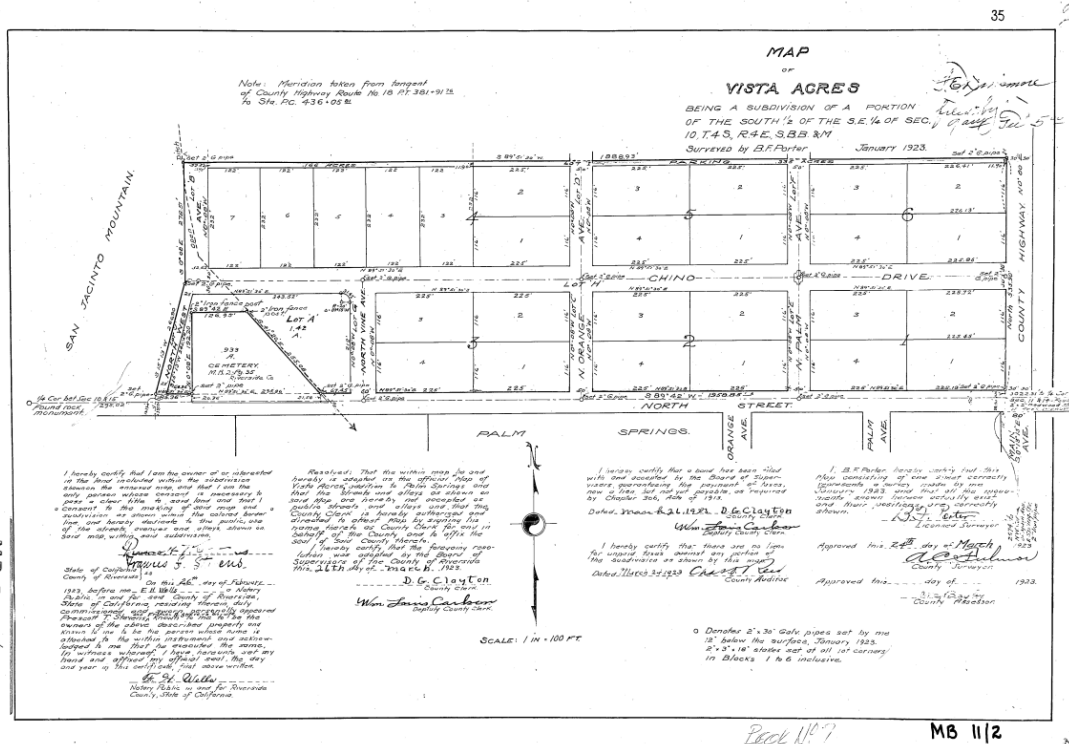
The Hicks Residence was built in the Merito Vista tract, one of three early subdivisions which now are known as "Old Las Palmas." Alvah Hicks is so closely associated with the creation of the Old Las Palmas neighborhood, its development is an important part of his story.

Palm Springs in the early 1920s was a world away from the city it is today. Other than a few resorts and commercial buildings, the dusty roads were lined with enormous shade trees. A rustic wooden structure was the site of the hot springs. In *Our Araby*, author J. Smeaton Chase describes the small village's resident population of the early 1920s:

I, for one, could not wish for better neighbors than our Indians: I should be pleased, indeed, to feel sure that they could say as much for us. They are but few in number, forty or fifty, for the Cahuillas are scattered in small rancherias over a wide territory. The white population is variable. In winter and spring, when the "Standing Room Only" sign hangs out, there may be a total of three hundred or more residents and visitors (the latter much more numerous): in the hot months residents may number a dozen or two and visitors there are none...For a small place, the number of people who have fallen under the charm of Palm Springs, and their variety of class and kind, is rather surprising. You would agree as to the latter point if I were to begin to mention names. Wealth and fashion, as such, are not much attracted to our

village: Palm Beach, not Palm Springs, is their mark: but among the fraternity of brains the word has passed about, and persons of mark are ever finding their way here, returning again and again, and bringing or sending others. But then, the importance of persons of mark in any community is apt to be overestimated; the important thing is the general quality, the average. The average with is automatically raised by the total absence of any hooligan element, such as is sometimes in evidence on the sands of the sea-shore. To that class the sands or Our Araby do not appeal. On the other hand, the scientists, writers, painters, musicians—in fact, all kinds of people who love quiet, thoughtful things and whose work or enjoyment lies in natural instead of artificial fields, come and share with us the wholesome pleasures and interests that are inherent in a clean, new, unspoiled bit of this wonderful old world.¹⁶

Of the built environment of the tiny village, Chase describes, “a place of two or three score of unpretentious cottages scattered along half a dozen palm- and pepper-shaded streets. We do not run much to lawns and formal gardens: we live in the desert because we like it, hence we don’t care to shut ourselves away in little cified enclosures. But the two or three old places which formed the nucleus of the settlement are bowers of bloom and umbrageous greenery. Gray old fig-trees lean out over the sidewalk, while oranges, dates, grapefruit, lemons, and trees of other sorts for fruit or ornament flourish in tribute to the memory of that wise old Scotsman and pioneer, Doctor Welwood Murray, who had the courage to plant and the patience to rear them in the teeth of horticultural disabilities.”¹⁷



Palm Springs’ first residential tract, Vista Acres. This twenty-acre, twenty-seven parcel site was subdivided by PT Stevens in January 1923.

¹⁶ Our Araby, J. Smeaton Chase, J. J. Little & Ives Company, New York, 1920, 17-18.

¹⁷ Ibid, 21-22.



In this circa 1933 photograph, the O'Donnell Golf Club is in the foreground, with the Vista Acres tract (1923) immediately to the north. The Merito Vista tract (1925) can be seen north of that. Note the dirt roads, sparse development, and open land, and the El Mirador tower in the distance. The Hicks Residence is just out of frame at left. Courtesy Mary Kummings and Steve Scott.

With the upgrade of Nellie Coffman’s Desert Inn, prescient developers saw the potential for tracts of improved residential parcels adjacent to the hotel. The first of these tracts, Vista Acres, was subdivided by PT Stevens, and the tract was created in January 1923. This tract would be the first of three phases later known as the “Old Las Palmas” neighborhood (the other two being Merito Vista and Las Palmas Estates). Working with contractor Alvah Hicks, the town’s first speculative housing began construction. According to Hicks’ grandson Jim Hicks, Alvah Hicks built twenty homes in those three tracts. Shortly thereafter, Dr. J.J. Kocher developed two phases of a tract near what would become the El Mirador Hotel, known as “Las Hacienditas.” Never one to be outdone, Pearl applied for two tracts in her Tennis Club land, Tahquitz Park #1 and #2, both in 1923. In 1924, the Palm Canyon Mesa neighborhood was platted for Edmund T. Fulford, and the development began. Below is a table showing the tract development of the 1920s in Palm Springs.

Tract Name	Date Developed	Developer
Vista Acres	January 1923	Prescott T. (“PT”) Stevens
Tahquitz Park	March 1923	Pearl McCallum McManus
Las Hacienditas	May 1923	J. J. Kocher
Palm Canyon Mesa	December 1924	Edmund T. Fulford
Merito Vista	April 1925	Prescott T. Stevens
Araby Tract	June 1925	H.W. Otis and Son
Las Palmas Estates	November 1926	Prescott T. Stevens
Palm Springs Estates	January 1927	Prescott T. Stevens

Vista Santa Rosa	May 1927	Raymond Cree
Palos Verdes Estates	July 1928	Harriet Dowie Cody and Reta McDowie

“OLD LAS PALMAS”

Known colloquially today as “Old Las Palmas,” the desirable neighborhood was developed in three phases, each with its own unique name. PT Stevens initially subdivided them all, some on land bought from Alvah Hicks. In 1923, PT Stevens created the Vista Acres tract, one of Palm Springs’ first residential tracts—if not the first. It was directly above what would soon become the O’Donnell Golf Course. According to the Historic Resources Group’s *Appendix B: Overview of Tract Development*, part of their *Palm Springs Citywide Survey*, “The transition from resort to residential development began in earnest in 1923. In January of that year, Prescott T. Stevens developed Vista Acres, a twenty-seven-parcel subdivision west of Palm Canyon Drive along W. Chino Drive. This was quickly followed in May by the subdivision of Las Hacienditas, immediately to the south of El Mirador, developed by Dr. J.J. Kocher.”

The Hicks Residence was built in one of Palm Springs’ earliest tracts, the Merito Vista tract. Developed by PT Stevens, it was conveniently located just north of Nellie Coffman’s Desert Inn and the newly-built O’Donnell House. Thomas O’Donnell completed his private golf course the same year Merito Vista was subdivided.

Description of the Merito Vista tract from the Historic Resources Group’s Palm Springs Citywide Survey:

DEVELOPER Prescott T. Stevens

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY Prescott T. Stevens (1846-1932) was ultimately Palm Springs’ largest pre-World War II residential real estate developer. Stevens, a successful Colorado cattle rancher, relocated with his wife Frances to California in 1912 to seek refuge from her respiratory problems.

They first settled in Hollywood, where he invested in Hollywood real estate, then moved to Palm Springs for the better air. By 1920, Stevens had purchased a large amount of land north of downtown Palm Springs. He also bought several thousand acres from the Southern Pacific Railroad to the east and the north of the village to ensure a steady supply of water for his holdings. He bought shares in the original Palm Valley Water Company and then formed the Whitewater Mutual Water Company and the Palm Springs Water Company. [Later bought by Hicks, with help from Tom O’Donnell]. With his colleague Alvah Hicks, a carpenter and nascent homebuilder, they subdivided many of Palm Spring’s earliest developments: the Merito Vista tract (1925), Las Palmas Estates (1926), and Palm Springs Estates (1927). Recognizing the best way to sell homes was through tourism, Stevens, Hicks and other developers built the legendary El Mirador Hotel in 1927. Before long, Stevens was convincing tourists to trade up to home ownership.

Merito Vista was advertised for its “natural beauty,” its status as a playground for the wealthy, and its subdivision into “small estate parcels” for those who “...do not necessarily care to erect pretentious homes here.”¹⁸ Indeed the parcel sizes for the 125 lots in Merito Vista are narrow and deep. However, the design of the subdivision deviates from a basic grid pattern to include curving and rounded streets evocative of the suburban residential community plans of Frederick Law Olmsted.¹⁹ Merito Vista was a success as it reportedly “...practically sold out during the first season.”²⁰ Sanborn Maps from 1929 reveal that sales may have been brisk, but building was far slower; just twelve parcels in the development had structures associated with them by 1929.²¹ Homes in Merito Vista were chiefly Spanish Colonial Revival, or early iterations of the California Ranch style. More than twenty of them were reportedly built by carpenter turned general contractor, Alvah Hicks, who developed a reputation for quality building. Often these houses were built on speculation, then quickly sold.²² Often, homeowners purchased multiple parcels for their estates, contributing to relatively low-density development. Even as late as 1952, aerial photographs show significant numbers of undeveloped parcels within the tract.

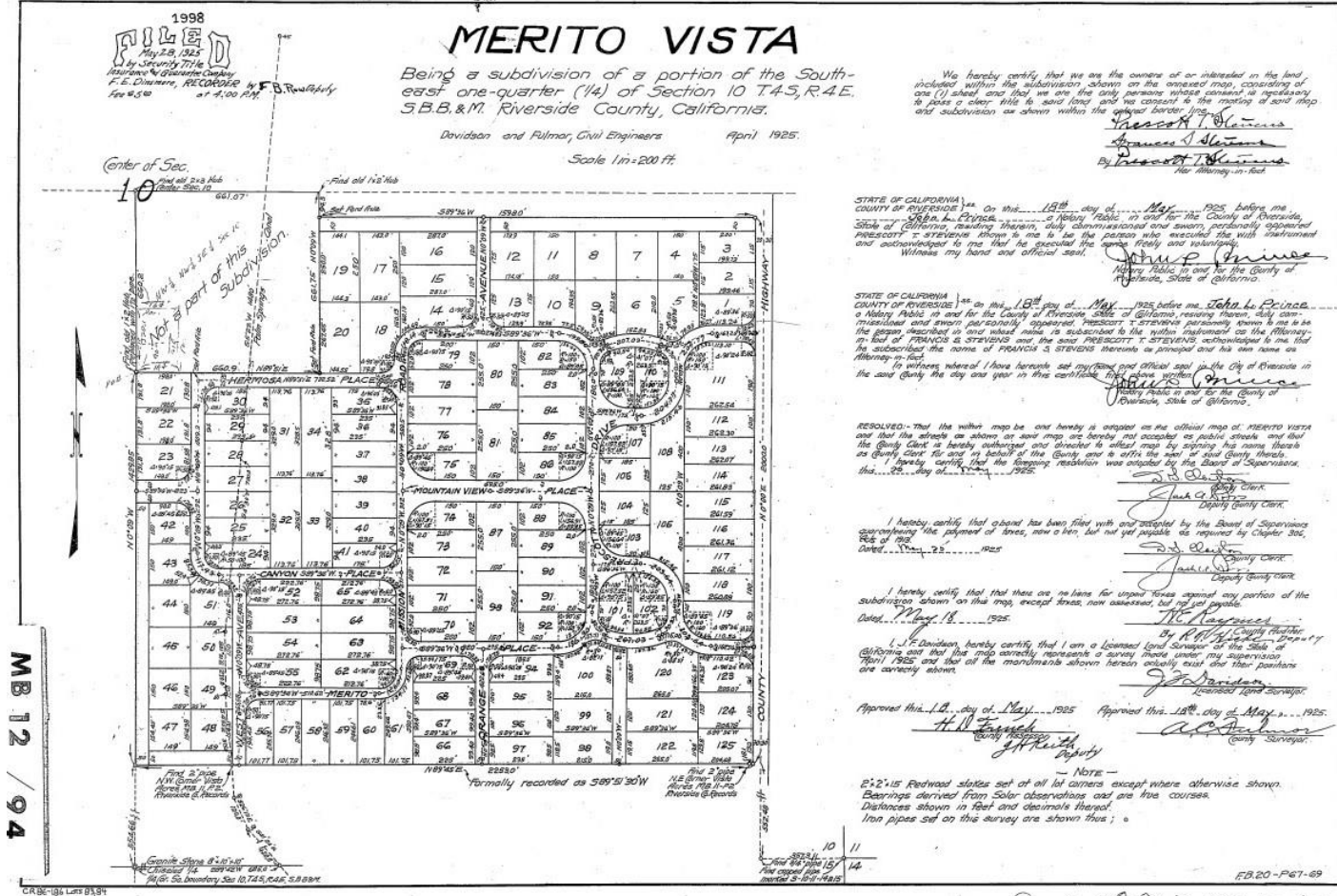
¹⁸ “Display Ad 109,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 7, 1926

¹⁹ Olmsted was America’s pre-eminent landscape designer in the late 19th century. He designed the Columbian Exposition of 1893, New York’s Central Park and the improvements to the White House grounds of 1902.

²⁰ “Desert Acres Jump to \$1500,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 25, 1926, E7.

²¹ Sanborn Maps online Los Angeles Public Library Database, Palm Springs Feb. 1929, Sheet 8-9.

²² Greg Niemann, *Palm Springs Legends* (San Diego, CA: Sunbelt Publications, 2006), 130



The Merito Vista tract map from 1925.

The following year, 1926, PT Stevens bought 100 acres from Alvah Hicks just north of the Merito Vista tract for \$150,000. The *Los Angeles Times* declared, "Desert Acres Jump to \$1500," remarking that the price paid per acre — \$1,500 — for unimproved land in Palm Springs was believed to be the highest ever paid.²³ Stevens then subdivided the tract, which was known as the Las Palmas Estates tract.

On the heels of his success with Merito Vista, Prescott T. Stevens immediately began subdividing a large parcel of land directly to the north which he called Las Palmas Estates. Las Palmas Estates is bordered by Palm Canyon Drive on the east, Stevens Road on the north, Via Monte Vista to the west, and Via Lola on the south. Under the name Evans-Lee Corporation of Los Angeles, the land was purchased for \$150,000 and subdivided into 165 parcels of one-fourth to one-third acre.²⁴ Once again a layout of gently curving streets evoking Olmsted's ideas for gracious neighborhood development was employed. The large lots and groups of native palms made it a sentimental favorite of local developer Raymond Cree

²³ "Desert Acres Jump to \$1500," *Los Angeles Times*, April 25, 1926, E7.

²⁴ Evans-Lee was a big Los Angeles developer and was affiliated with sales, and was the agent, for both Merito Vista and Las Palmas Estates in newspaper ads and articles. Both mention Cree and Chaffey as the developers, but the tract documentation shows PT Stevens as the initial developer.

(1875-1967).²⁵ Warm weather, recreational amenities, and good schools were featured selling points in advertisements to Los Angeles residents. The tract also boasted “underground utilities and [an] abundance of meterless irrigation water.”²⁶ With ads pronouncing “A Home in Palm Springs is Well within Your Means,” Stevens marketed the accessibility of these homes.²⁷ Hollywood celebrities, Los Angeles businessmen and Eastern and Midwestern snowbirds soon were building homes in Las Palmas Estates.²⁸ As a result, the tract was referred to by Los Angeles society columnist Joan Winchell as “The Bel-Air section of Palm Springs.”²⁹

At the time, the *Los Angeles Times* reported, “During the past season, it is said, activity at Palm Springs has exceeded all records, and many fine winter homes have been erected at the winter resort. Purchasers at Palm Springs who have erected winter homes, or who plan the early construction of such homes, include King C. Gillette, Los Angeles capitalist; William Mead, local capitalist; Roland Bishop, of Bishop & Co; T. A. O’Donnell, chairman of the board of the California Petroleum Company; William Reis, capitalist; Mrs. Frederick Stevens, of Pasadena; Thomas Douglas of Hollywood; E. B. Shideler of Pasadena; M. Herman Brill, capitalist, and others.”³⁰

²⁵ “Desert Acres Jump to \$1500,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 25, 1926, E7.

²⁶ In the Riverside Community Book, Cree called it “His crowning achievement.” Often, the owners, developers, builders, and realtors played multiple roles in multiple developments. For example, someone might be the owner on one tract, the real estate agent on another, or in cases of builders, just built the houses independent of any ownership. In this case, Prescott T. Stevens is listed on the tract map, the *Los Angeles Times* mentions the Evans-Lee Corporation, and Cree is quoted in the Riverside Community Book.

²⁷ “Display Ad 41,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 19, 1930, B2.

²⁸ “Fine Homes Rise in Las Palmas,” *Palm Springs News*, December 17, 1936, 6

²⁹ “Joan Winchell,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 21, 1958, A1.

³⁰ “Desert Acres Jump to \$1500,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 25, 1926, E7.

PALM SPRINGS
 "OUR ARABY"

If you have not been to Palm Springs, now is the time to go, in order to fully enjoy its sheer natural beauty, its delightfully ideal winter climate and its invigorating elevation.

Men of wealth have always been quick to find and appreciate the beauty spots of America and convert them to their own pleasure, and in the past the development of Palm Springs has been confined to men of large means who pioneered this treasure spot.

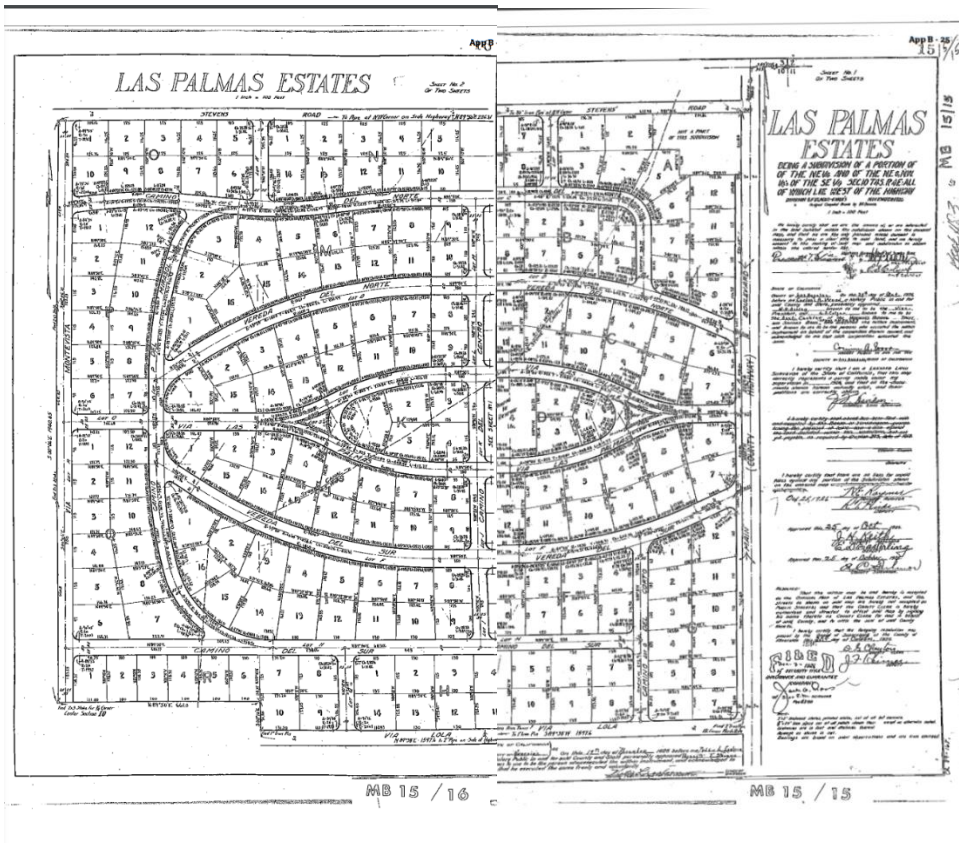
With the subdividing, however, of Merito Vista into small estates, its privileges have been made available to those who do not necessarily care to erect pretentious homes here.

Go to Palm Springs this month and while there, investigate Merito Vista, one of the most unique of the exclusive California subdivisions.

(By auto, via the Los Angeles-Imperial Valley Route. Daily stage from Union Stage Depot, Los Angeles to Palm Springs.)

MERITO VISTA
 EVANS-LEE CORPORATION
 Exclusive Los Angeles Agents
 514 California Bank Bldg.
 METropolitan 3148
CREE & CHAFFEY
 Exclusive Palm Springs Agents
 Palm Springs, California

An ad for the Merito Vista tract, which advertised its "small estates," which catered to "those who do not necessarily care to erect pretentious homes." The ad also references J. Smeaton Chase's 1923 book "Our Araby." Los Angeles Times, February 7, 1926.



The Las Palmas Estates tract map, 1926.



*The Carpet of Allah—the
Desert in Bloom.*



*A beautiful illustrated
booklet of Palm Springs
will be sent upon request*

*The luxurious Desert
Inn, renowned through-
out all America, is open
and reservations should
be made early to insure
accommodations.*

For information, phone or write

HUGH EVANS & COMPANY, Inc.

Suite 514 California Bank Building, Los Angeles, Calif.
Phone METropolitan 3148

or

CREE & CHAFFEY, Exclusive Agents
Palm Springs, California

THE LURE OF THE DESERT

HAVE you ever stood at evening on the edge of the desert and “watched the big husky sun wallow in crimson and gold, and grow dim”? Have you seen the soft, pastel shades at eventide as they slowly creep over the sand dunes and stretch on and on into seeming infinite space?

If you have, then you know some of the alluring charm of Palm Springs, “the Algiers of America.”

Nowhere in America, except at Palm Springs, can you find the poignant beauty, the dry, healthful climate and the desert lure of such famous winter playgrounds as Algiers and Morocco. Here, away from the crowds and noise, you can enjoy the all-pervading peace and beauty of the desert vastness and with all the comforts of city life.

More and more people of wealth and culture are building winter homes in Palm Springs, where the highly desirable Merito Vista and Las Palmas Estates afford them an ideal homesite. These two estates are of limited acreage and comprise the choicest of the Palm Springs residential properties.

In this December 1926 advertisement in “California Southland” magazine, the twin Merito Vista and Las Palmas Estates tracts were being touted as “highly desirable,” the “choicest of the Palm Springs residential properties.”

LATER OWNERS DURING THE PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE

(1926-1936)

Elizabeth Trischman and Anna Trischman Pryor (1929-1931)



Sisters Elizabeth Trischman (left) and Anna K. Pryor (right) in front of their house, circa 1950. Photo: YELL 122107

In 1929, Alvah and Teresa Hicks sold the house to sisters Elizabeth Trischman (1886-1984) and Anna Trischman Pryor (1884-1973). From the National Park Service website for Yellowstone National Park:

The Trischman family first came to Yellowstone National Park when George Trischman began work as a post carpenter for the U.S. Army at Fort Yellowstone in 1899. George and his wife, Margaret, had five children: Anna, Harry, Elizabeth, George T., and Joseph. Though this family achieved national notoriety when a mentally ill Margaret attacked and killed their youngest son, Joseph, they are even more well-known for the contributions they made to Yellowstone National Park through three generations of hard work and success.

After finishing school, Harry returned to the park and began work aiding the army as a packer and civilian scout. After the creation of the National Park Service in 1916, he became a Park ranger with later promotions to Assistant Chief Ranger and Chief Buffalo Keeper. His scout diaries and many documents relating to his work in the park are located in the archives and provide a great deal of information about the park in its early days.

Anna worked as a schoolteacher at Yellowstone for a short while before marrying George R. Pryor. After marrying, the couple purchased Ole Anderson's Curio Shop at Mammoth Hot Springs in 1908. Within a few years of purchasing this business, Elizabeth would join her sister, taking over George's share of the company. Together, Anna and Elizabeth expanded their business over the next four decades to include soda fountains, souvenirs, ice cream, toiletries, cigars, a cafeteria, and a very popular little shop called the Devil's Kitchenette located next to the Devil's Kitchen cave, a large tourist attraction. By 1932, Anna and Elizabeth owned all of the general stores and gas stations in the northern half of the park.

Anna and Elizabeth also employed a third generation of Trischman's in their shops. Anna's daughter Georganna began work in the shop in 1925 and eventually served on the Board of Directors for the company. Harry's son, Harry (Bud) Jr., also worked at the shops and married one of his fellow employees, Louise Mohar. Harry and Louise ran the Mammoth shop during the winter months, the only Pryor and Trischman store to remain open outside of the summer season.

Anna and Elizabeth's shops and cafeterias were very popular. They became very well-known members of the Mammoth community and mention of the sisters and their places of business appear frequently in other park employees diaries (e.g. Herma Albertson Baggle, the first woman to be employed full-time as a Junior Park Naturalist at Yellowstone) and correspondence (e.g Judge Meldrum, U.S. Commissioner) that now reside in the Yellowstone Archives. The archives also houses many of the Trischman and Pryor financial records and concessionaire permits.

From "Geyser Bob's Yellowstone Park Historical Service" blog:

In 1932 the women branched out and purchased all of George Whittaker's Yellowstone Park Store operations at Mammoth and Canyon. His holdings included an interest in the service station business and general stores at both locations. They now held a monopoly on the store business in the northern portion of the park, with the exception of the Haynes Photo Shops. Charles Hamilton remained in control of the stores in the southern portion of the park.

The Pryor & Trischman stores incorporated in 1946 and became known as Pryor Stores, Inc. Anna Pryor held a 2/3 interest in the business, while her sister owned the other third. Formed on October 1, Pryor was President and Trischman Secretary.

Six years later, after 45 years in business, the women decided to retire and sold out to Charles Hamilton in 1953 for \$333,000. According to an insurance audit in September 1950, the Pryor Stores' property at Mammoth consisted of the Park Curio Shop itself, with a single-story garage and warehouse located behind it, and the general store, service station and single-story employee dormitory located at the rear. Also at Mammoth were the general store, gas station, cafeteria, and dormitory facilities at the Mammoth Auto Camp. The Canyon properties consisted of the single-story general store and gas station, which housed the post office, soda

fountain, residence, storage, and a two-story dormitory building located nearby. The women ended up with a profit of just over \$100,000 and retired to their home in Los Angeles.³¹

Beatrice B.R. Moore (1931-1935)

The Trischman sisters only owned the house for two years. In 1931, they sold the house to Beatrice B. R. Moore, the wife of Thomas Ewing Moore (1867-1935), who was an important career diplomat who served under many presidents in a wide variety of countries. Beatrice (1878-1955) was born into a Gilded Age New York family. The couple married in 1907 and had four children.

BEATRICE BAIRD RUTTER MOORE

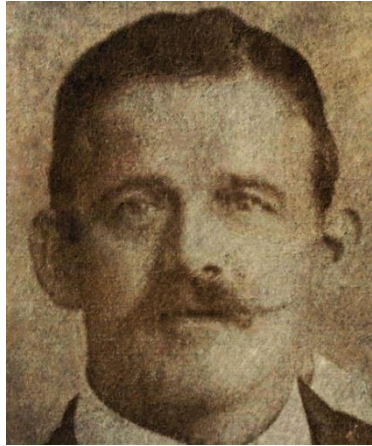
Beatrice Baird Rutter was born on October 30, 1878, in New York City, to John Renaud Rutter and Ella Baird Rutter. Beatrice's capitalist father, John Rutter, came from a very wealthy family involved in the railroads. He grew up in one of the sizable Gilded Age mansions at 814 Fifth Avenue. Beatrice's mother, Ella, was also independently wealthy – her father was Matthew Baird (1817-1877), one of the early partners of the Baldwin Locomotive Works, becoming sole owner after Baldwin's death. Baird served as a director of the Central National Bank, the Texas Pacific Railroad Company, the Pennsylvania Steel Company, the Andover Iron Company, the West Chester and Philadelphia Railroad Company. He was also one of the incorporators and a director of the American Steamship Company and was a large stockholder of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company. Upon his death in 1877, Ella inherited over \$100,000. Beatrice's young life wasn't easy – her mother died when she was fourteen. Because her father (who lacked ambition and liked a high-quality of living and the "yacht life at Nantucket"³²) wasn't interested in parenting his daughter, she went to live with her maternal step-grandmother Anna Baird at "Bardwold Castle," her thirty-acre estate outside Philadelphia. Her father, John, traveled extensively through Europe in the 1890s, and in 1898, when he was forty-seven, he married twenty-three-year-old Florence Garrett (which caused much consternation in the family). He died the following year, leaving his daughter Beatrice his estate. Shortly after that, Beatrice began living with her aunt Florence and uncle John Brinkerhoff Jackson, the United States Minister to Greece. While attending school in Greece, around 1906, Beatrice met the young diplomat Thomas Ewing Moore. They were married April 16, 1907, in Athens. The *Washington Post* reported, "The most important diplomatic wedding of the season was solemnized recently at the American Legation, when Thomas Ewing Moore, first secretary of legation at Peking, married Beatrice Baird Rutter, only daughter of the late John Rutter, of New York, and niece of the American Minister to Greece."³³ Another newspaper reported, "The wedding took place in Athens late last month, and included among the wedding guests were the King of Greece and other members of the royal family, together with all the resident diplomatic colony. Among the royal gifts to the bride were a diamond sapphire and pearl brooch from the king and queen, a jeweled fan from the younger prince and his wife, and a

³¹ <https://www.geyserbob.com/pryor-trischman>, accessed March 12, 2023.

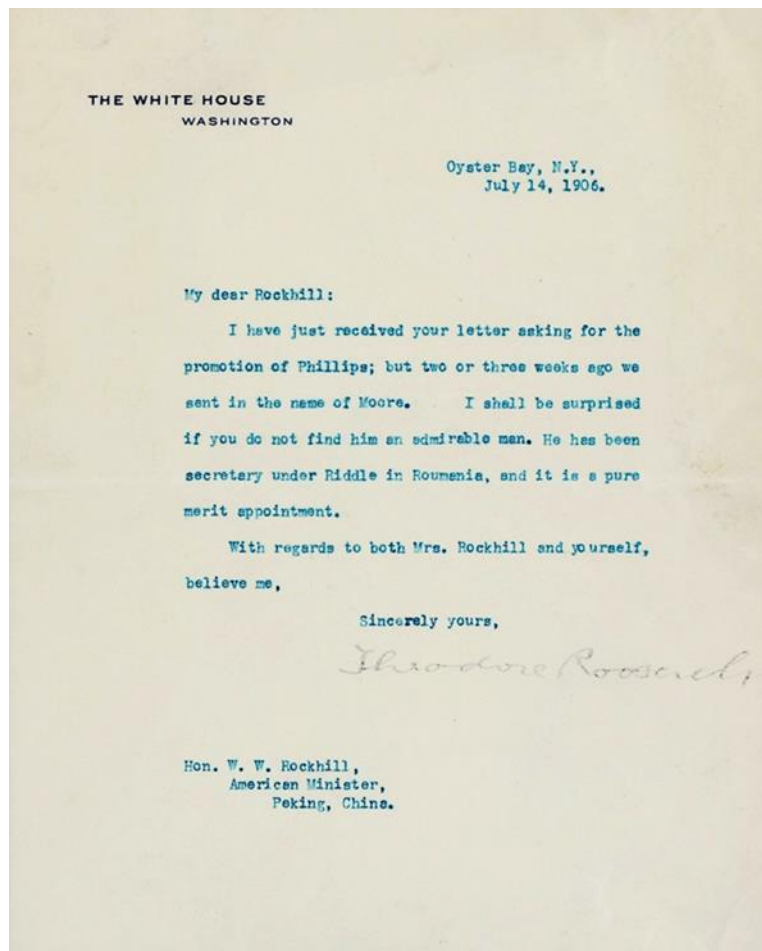
³² Email from Lynne Rutter, July 22, 2022. Rutter is a great-great-niece of Beatrice Moore.

³³ "T. E. Moore—Miss B. B. Rutter," *Washington Post*, May 5, 1907, 14.

priceless pair of Cape d'Monte vases from the crown prince and his consort. Mr. and Mrs. Moore, after the ceremony left for Corfu, enroute for America."³⁴



Diplomat Thomas Ewing Moore, ca. 1900.



A 1906 letter from President Theodore Roosevelt to the American Minister to China, W. W. Rockhill, discussing Thomas Ewing Moore's diplomatic appointment.

³⁴ "Wedding of Washington, Pa. Man in Athens Causes Talk in Capital," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, May 26, 1907, 32.

Thomas Ewing Moore was born January 11, 1867, in Lancaster, Ohio to Marshall Frank Moore (1829-1870) and Francis "Fanny" Van Trump (1837-1928). On both sides, Thomas Moore had many relatives involved in politics. Marshall F. Moore had gone to Yale, and later served in the Civil War first as Lieutenant Colonel of the 17th Ohio Volunteer Infantry, then as Colonel and commander of the 69th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. On March 13, 1865, he was brevetted Brigadier General, U.S. Volunteers for "gallant and meritorious services during the war, and especially at the Battle of Jonesboro, Ga," and Major General, U.S. Volunteers for 'gallant and meritorious services during the war." He served as Governor of the Washington Territory from 1867 to 1869. He died in 1870, when his son Thomas was just three. Francis Moore's father was Philadelp Van Trump (1810-1874), a politician who served as a U.S. Representative from Ohio from 1867 to 1873.³⁵ So it was natural that Thomas Ewing Moore would follow them into a life of diplomatic service.

After his father's death, his mother, Fanny, returned to Ohio to live with her parents, following them to Washington, DC. Thomas attended Georgetown University and University of Maryland. In July, 1889, Thomas entered the service as a commercial agent. "Subsequently, he served at several posts in Germany. One of his positions was that of consul at Weimar in 1899. He was named secretary of the legation and American consul general to Rumania and Service in March, 1905."³⁶ Between 1889 and 1903, he also served briefly in Rome. In 1906, he served as Secretary of Legation and Consul General at Bucharest and Belgrade, before moving on to Peking where he was Secretary of Legation from 1906 to 1907. While serving in Peking, somehow Moore found himself in Greece, where he met a young heiress, Beatrice Baird Rutter, and a romance began.

After they married, Moore served briefly as Secretary of Legation, Lisbon, Portugal, before resigning from the service in 1908. The couple had four children, Evelyn, Eric Thomas, Georgiana, and Diana. In 1914, Moore re-entered the Diplomatic Service and served as special agent in Rome and Berlin. He resigned again briefly during the Great War to carry on war relief work and was a captain in the American Red Cross, serving in France.³⁷ After the War, he re-entered the service again, serving in several posts, ending in 1928 with that of vice-consul at Luxemburg.

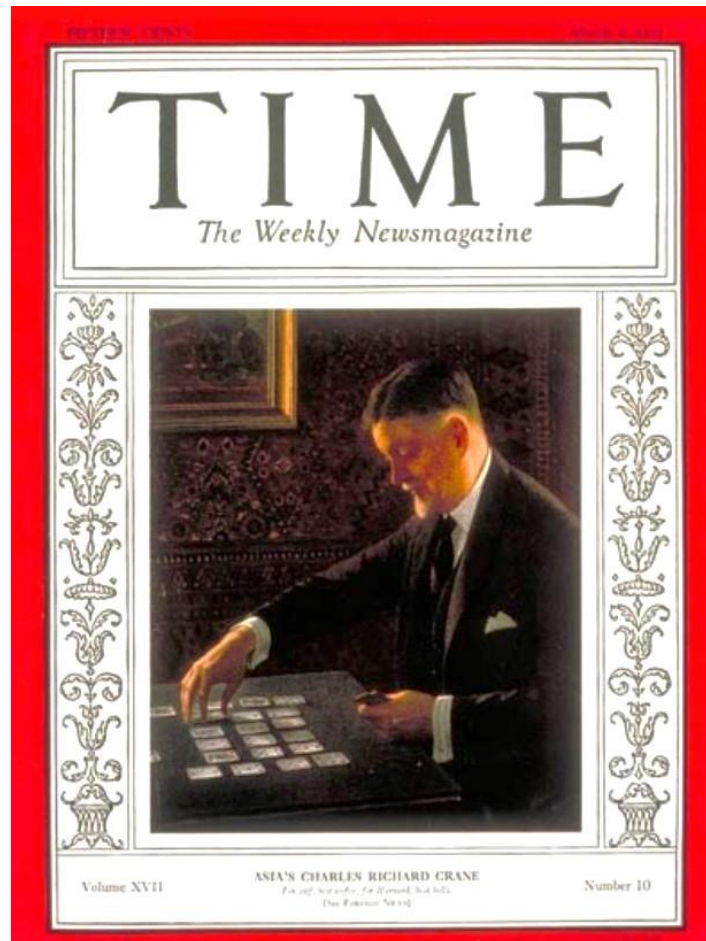
In the middle 1920s, the Moores began spending winters in Palm Springs at the El Mirador Hotel – Beatrice and her daughters were there more than Thomas. After he left the diplomatic corps, he lived primarily in London, with daughter Georgiana, while Beatrice spent most of her time in Los Angeles. He authored several books during this period, including *In the Heart of Spain* (Universal Knowledge Foundation, 1927) and *Peter's City; an Account of the Origin, Development and Solution of the Roman Question* (MacMillan Company, 1930). Thomas Ewing Moore died in England on December 27, 1935. Beatrice Baird Rutter Moore sold the Palm Springs house in 1935 to fellow diplomat Charles Crane. By 1940, she was living in Washington DC with her

³⁵ He also studied law and was admitted to the bar. He started practice in Lancaster on May 14, 1838. He served as delegate to the Whig National Convention in 1852. In 1856, Van Trump was an unsuccessful candidate of the American Party for Governor. He served as delegate to the Bell and Everett State convention in 1860 and served as president. He served as judge of the Court of Common Pleas from 1862 to 1867. Van Trump failed in elections to be a judge on the Supreme Court of Ohio in 1863, 1864, and 1865. Van Trump was elected as a Democrat to the Fortieth, Forty-first, and Forty-second Congresses (March 4, 1867 – March 3, 1873). He was not a candidate for renomination in 1872. He served as president of the Democratic State convention in 1869. Van Trump resumed the practice of law in Lancaster, Ohio, and died there on July 31, 1874. He is buried in Elmwood Cemetery.

³⁶ "Thomas E. Moore, U. S. Diplomat, Dies," *Evening Star* (Washington, District of Columbia), January 4, 1936, 7.

³⁷ Thomas E. Moore, U. S. Diplomat, Dies," *Evening Star* (Washington, District of Columbia), January 4, 1936, 7.

daughter Rosemary. Beatrice and Rosemary moved to Montana in 1942, and Beatrice died there in 1945 at the Hotel Florence in Missoula.



Charles R. Crane on the cover of Time Magazine, March 3, 1931.

Second Significant Owners (1935-1943)

“Villa Cornelia.”³⁸ Charles R. and Cornelia Crane

Businessman, ambassador, philanthropist, Arabist, and diplomat Charles Richard Crane (August 7, 1858 – February 15, 1939) was the heir to a large industrial fortune and was a connoisseur of Arab culture and a well-respected Arabist. In his long career, his widespread business interests allowed him to enter domestic and international political affairs. He enjoyed privileged access to many influential power brokers at the top levels of government. Starting just after World War I, Crane and his wife Cornelia began spending their winters in the desert and, in the 1920s, established date-growing orchards in Indio Borrego Springs. They bought the Hicks Residence from fellow diplomat Thomas Ewing Moore in 1935, and Charles Crane died in the house, which he named “Villa Cornelia” after his wife, in 1939.

³⁸ In the 1940 census, Cornelia Crane is listed as living at 701 “Villa Cornelia” instead of Patencio.

Crane was born in Chicago on August 7, 1858, to Richard Teller Crane and Mary (Prentiss) Crane. Richard T. Crane and his brother Charles had formed the R. T. Crane & Bro. company, which manufactured and sold plumbing supplies and steam-heating equipment. In 1865 they incorporated, becoming Northwestern Manufacturing Company, and began manufacturing an extensive line of cast iron and brass industrial valves and fittings. After the catastrophic Chicago Fire of 1871, the company expanded its operations and was renamed Crane Bros. Manufacturing. By this time, they employed over 700 and were manufacturing over one million dollars' worth of products per year. The company changed its name for a final time in 1890 to the Crane Co. and supplied much of the pipe used for the central heating of the new Chicago skyscrapers. Around this time, they diversified to sell enameled cast iron bathroom products used when indoor plumbing became standard.

In 1881, Charles R. Crane married Cornelia Workman Smith (1862-1941). The couple had five children: Richard, Cornelia, Mary, Frances, and John.

Charles R. Crane was the eldest of Richard T. Crane's sons, but he wasn't as interested in the family business as his brothers. His interests and passions were varied.³⁹ He became involved in politics and was appointed minister to China by President William Howard Taft in 1909. However, almost immediately he was recalled to Washington and forced to resign. Secretary of State Philander C. Knox had held Crane responsible for publishing an article in a Chicago newspaper that documented the United States government's objections to two recent treaties between Japan and China.



Charles Richard Crane in 1909



Cornelia Crane, 1920. Courtesy University of Chicago Library, Special Collections Research Center

³⁹ "As a young man, Crane traveled extensively with his friend Charles B. Cory, a leading ornithologist whom Crane had met while visiting Boston. Crane and Cory shared an interest in baseball, and from 1888 to 1892, the pair funded and played on the Hyannis town team in what is now the Cape Cod Baseball League. At Cory and Crane's expense, various well-known professional and amateur players were brought in to play alongside the Hyannis locals. When Cory lost his family's fortune in 1906, Crane purchased Cory's vast collection of bird specimens and donated it to Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History with the stipulation that the museum would employ Cory as permanent curator of the collection." (From Wikipedia).

According to Mehmet Hasan Bulut, Crane then “began his mission in the Ottoman Empire from the Balkans. He pondered the Ottoman Empire, which Europe saw as a ‘sick man’ that should ‘die an early natural death.’ In 1909, he went to Bulgaria to try to realize the Bulgarian revolution with the money he distributed. In 1904, the Ottoman Empire came to the brink of a civil war in Bulgaria.”⁴⁰

When his father died in 1912, the company was left to Charles and his brothers. Two years later, Charles withdrew from the company by selling his shares to his eldest brother. He then dedicated himself to "liberating" nations by dismantling empires. Mehmet Hasan Bulut writes, “A German-American war correspondent described Crane as follows: ‘An eccentric American plutocrat obsessed with the idea of freeing the oppressed people of the world ... The hero is depicted as employing not only his colossal American fortune but his brilliant American business ability for organizing a revolution throughout the world on strictly business principles. He chooses this occupation partly for excitement and partly because he is dominated by the idea that his money has been given to him to play the role of a worldwide liberator.’”⁴¹

Crane contributed heavily to Woodrow Wilson's 1912 election campaign and was rewarded with appointments to the 1917 Special Diplomatic Commission to Russia, as a member of the American Section of the Paris Peace Conference, and to the 1919 Inter-Allied Commission on Mandates in Turkey (which became known as the King-Crane Commission.) With the appointment of Crane as one of the commission's leaders, its goal was to issue a report to help inform the United States regarding creating a Jewish state in the Middle East. The report cautioned, "Not only you as president but the American people as a whole should realize that if the American government decided to support the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, they are committing the American people to the use of force in that area, since only by force can a Jewish state in Palestine be established or maintained."⁴² Because Crane was a passionate proponent of the independence of the Arab states, he opposed establishing a Jewish state in the Middle East.

President Wilson appointed Crane as United States Ambassador to China, where he served from March 22, 1920, to July 2, 1921. In 1925 he founded the New York-based Institute of Current World Affairs, which employed field representatives in Mexico, Jerusalem, and occasionally Moscow. These representatives compiled regular reports on developments in their regions and shared their expertise with lecture tours of major U.S. universities. The statements were also made available to the State Department.

In 1931, Crane helped finance the first explorations for oil in Saudi Arabia and Yemen. He was instrumental in gaining the American oil concession there.

⁴⁰ “Charles R. Crane: Millionaire from Chicago that inspired spy novels,” by Mehmet Hasan Bulut. (<https://www.dailysabah.com/arts/portrait/charles-r-crane-millionaire-from-chicago-that-inspired-spy-novels>. Accessed October 23, 2022).

⁴¹ “Charles R. Crane: Millionaire from Chicago that inspired spy novels,” by Mehmet Hasan Bulut. (<https://www.dailysabah.com/arts/portrait/charles-r-crane-millionaire-from-chicago-that-inspired-spy-novels>. Accessed October 23, 2022).

⁴² Charles R. Crane Wikipedia entry.



Charles R. Crane and his sister Frances Crane Lillie at Villa Cornelia in Palm Springs, 1936. From "Frances Crane Lillie, A Memoir."

CHARLES R. CRANE AND THE COACHELLA VALLEY'S DATE CULTURE

When Charles R. Crane, American business leader, and former United States Minister to China, acquired a tract of raw land in Coachella Valley in 1926, it was for the purpose of carrying out a hobby—date growing. Mr. Crane has seen much of the World, both as a traveler and on diplomatic missions, and one of the latter took him just after the war to Turkey and the Mohammedan mandate countries. Before he left for home that trip, a previous interest in dates had ripened to such a degree that it is said he was with difficulty restrained from turning sheik and living on a palm-fringed Arabian oasis. That may be exaggerating a bit, but Mr. Crane's enthusiasm over the possibilities of date culture in our own Southwest will be readily apparent to everyone who reads the following. —Editor's note for a 1928 Los Angeles Times article written by Charles R. Crane on Crane's date orchards in the Coachella Valley.

After World War I, the Cranes began spending winters in Palm Springs, staying at the Desert Inn. By this time, the growing of dates had been established in the eastern Coachella Valley, where growers like Paul Popenoe had already planted tens of thousands of date offshoots obtained from sources in the Persian Gulf and Algeria.

Through the 1910s and into the '20s, the date-growing industry began to flourish. Crane recognized the important work being done by the United States Department of Agriculture in the early 1920s, which he wrote “looked at it objectively, much as they look at a pineapple, a melon or an orange. The department found that many things could be done with the tree, the fruit, and the actual cultivation. Off-shoots of the choicest varieties from all over the world, even the most remote cases, were gathered, studied, and experimented with, to find varieties suitable for American conditions. The entomological division especially found a fruitful field of work. We feel that we modern people are very enterprising, but we do not at all compare with the busy little insects, who ages ago discovered the value of the date palm and of its fruit, and who have been getting the first chance at it ever since. They don’t have any Henry Ford day, nor week-ends nor summers in the country.”⁴³ Crane made note that the specimens gathered by the USDA were found to be infected with insects, which delayed or destroyed the quality of the trees, and of the fruit. In the 1920s, the USDA had perfected ways of mitigating the insect problem, which inspired Crane to venture into the field. “The department worked out methods of controlling the pests on the tree, of protecting the fruit during the time of maturing, and of scientifically drying and at the same time sterilizing it, carefully packing it and keeping it in sterile chambers until the market called for it. Now it is possible to get a delicious, perfectly clean, sterile date in America twelve months in the year.”⁴⁴ These improved processes more than doubled production per tree, and as a result, “they are getting from an acre more than twice as much in food value as it is possible to get from any acre of corn, three times as much as from any acre of wheat. The two things that most affect a farmer are sunshine and water. In the desert, the sun shines in the most perfect way for date production all of the year round, and with the recent improvement in digging and operating of artesian wells, the water supply can be exactly controlled.”⁴⁵ Recent developments in sterilizing the offshoots before planting, and improved refrigeration, led Crane to invest in the date culture of the Coachella Valley.

In 1926, Crane bought a two-hundred-acre ranch near Indio and began experimenting with growing a variety of date palms which he had imported from his friends in the Middle East. “On it are many palms from Kashmir and Arabia which he imported himself—the personal gifts of various Sheiks who were his friends.”⁴⁶ He maintained a citrus grove at the ranch, with a relatively modest main house, guest house, and bungalow. “On this two-hundred-acre desert ranch he built a replica of the Near East, complete with a large ‘date palm garden’ and grapefruit, orange, and nectarine groves. His familiarity with the Near East led him to seek a source of underground water for his California oasis.”⁴⁷ It was reported that Crane’s land “was all raw land and a portion of it lying south and east of the Whitewater drainage ditch has since been developed. Two wells provide 1800 gallons of water a minute, which is ample to care for the land that has been leveled, and other water development will follow. One hundred Deglet Noors offshoots from a Yuma nursery and 250 from a Coachella Valley garden have already been set out. A hundred large Deglet Noors will be planted this spring and a thousand additional offshoots have been ordered. In addition to this extensive Deglet Noor planting,

⁴³ “Southwest Date Grower Beating Old World Sheik at Own Game,” by Charles R. Crane. *Los Angeles Times*, April 15, 1928, 151.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Charles R. Crane, Philanthropist and Manufacturer, Dies at Home Here,” *Palm Springs Limelight*, February 18, 1939, 4.

⁴⁷ Norman E. Saul, *The Life and Times of Charles R. Crane*, Lexington Books, 2013, 220.

Mr. Crane is starting a collection of many varieties of date palms, hoping to make it one of the really complete collections of its kind in the world and one of great scientific interest and practical value to the industry.”⁴⁸

In 1928 Crane also bought 160 acres in Borrego Springs, near a well recently dug by O. H. Ensign of Los Angeles. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that Crane hoped to “develop enough water for the irrigation of several hundred palms. The place is already being prepared for the purpose and offshoots are being secured. Only stock of known sterility in so far as pest infestation is concerned will be set out, as it is the New York man’s idea to establish a garden that is absolutely pest-free and then to keep it so. In time, it is his hope to produce in this rather isolated area similarly sterile stock for planting on his Coachella Valley lands.”⁴⁹

By 1936, the Cranes maintained their ranches in the east valley but wanted something closer to town. They bought the Hicks Residence from fellow diplomat Thomas Ewing Moore, and Crane named it “Villa Cornelia.” Using contractors Marte-Hansen, the Cranes added several guest rooms to the house, added an observation deck with adjacent tile-roofed tower. They also built a new detached garage.

At age eighty, Crane suffered a stroke at his Palm Springs home, followed by pneumonia. A few days later, on the evening of Tuesday, February 15, 1939, at 8:38, Crane died at Villa Cornelia, his wife Cornelia at his side. A funeral was held at the home the following Friday.⁵⁰ Cornelia Crane continued wintering at the house until her death in 1941.

According to his biographer, Norman E. Saul, Crane “was arguably the first true American globalist.” His activities involved Russia, China, and the Middle East, but Saul emphasizes “his travels in Russia and his role in the development and promotion of Russian studies in America. Crane represented the United States becoming a world power in business and diplomacy, and fostered an American appreciation and knowledge of Russian, Asian, and Middle Eastern societies.”⁵¹

⁴⁸ “Rich Easterner Buys More Land for Dates,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 15, 1928, 152.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

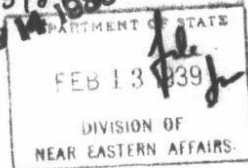
⁵⁰ “Death Claims Chas. R. Crane at Palm Springs,” *Desert Sun*, February 17, 1939, 2.

⁵¹ *The Life and Times of Charles R. Crane*, Norman E. Saul, Lexington Books, 2012.

COPY

*Letter to President
with draft reply to Mr. Crane
2/13/39 CR/LS*

VILLA CORNELIA
Palm Springs, California



January 27, 1939

My dear President:

This is a little postscriptum to the letter I sent you a few days ago about the way the Arabs make peace.

Imam Yahia was a great, outstanding opponent of Ibn Saud's and all the Arabs were concerned about the contest. After it was settled Imam Yahia wrote to me saying that Ibn Saud, instead of being his most bitter enemy, was really his most valuable friend; that with Ibn Saud's power behind him he no longer felt menaced by several serious enemies, including Italy, but felt perfectly secure.

With best wishes,

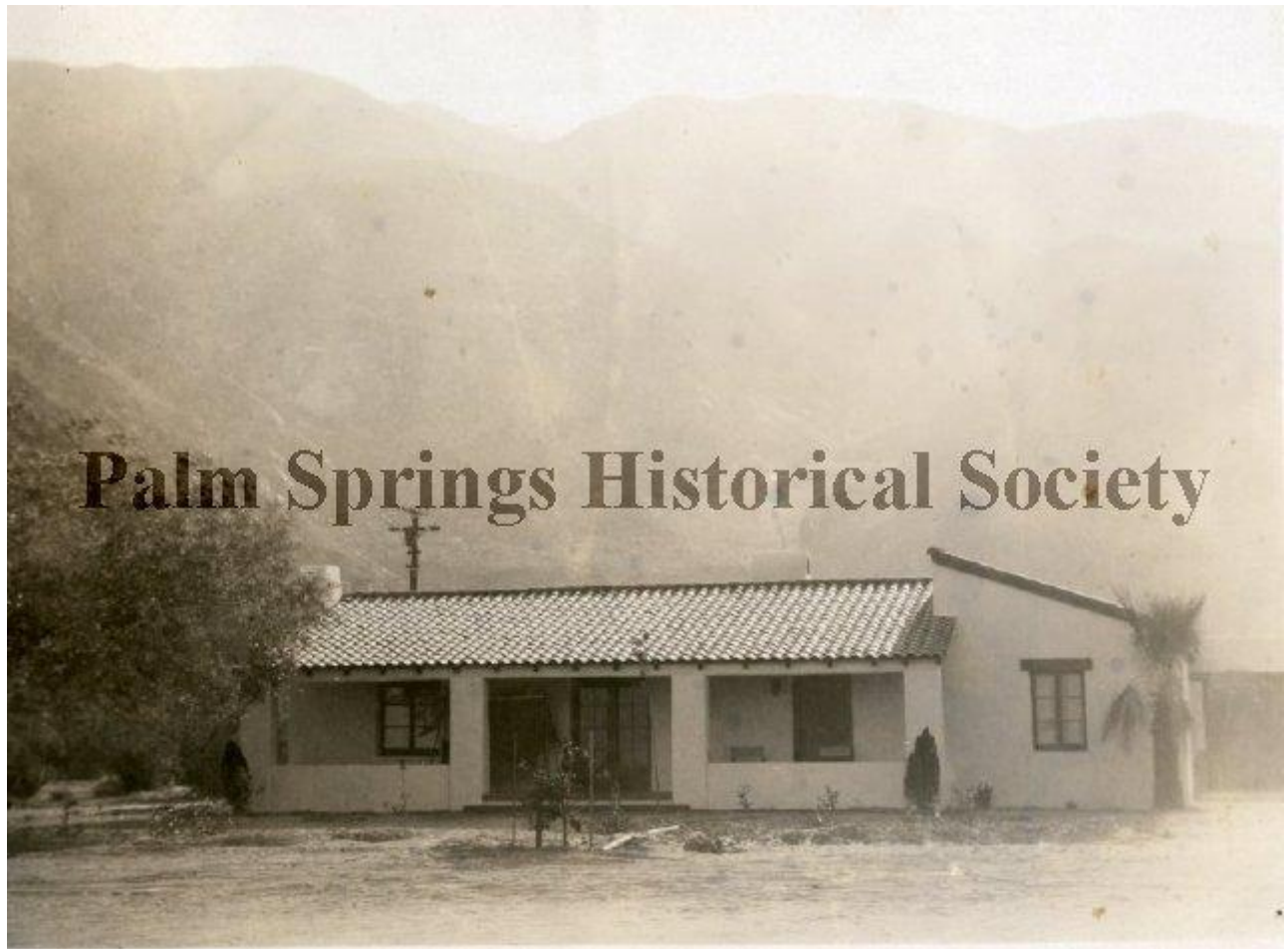
Faithfully yours,

CHARLES R. CRANE

His Excellency
Franklin D. Roosevelt,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

RECEIVED
FEB 13 1939

One of the hundreds of letters between United States presidents and Charles R. Crane.
This letter to Franklin D. Roosevelt was sent shortly before Crane died.



An early photograph taken shortly after construction was completed in 1926. Courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society. Note the mature mesquite tree at left which was left standing. It now is an enormous specimen tree.



Two of the first houses built by Hicks in the Vista Acres tract (1923) along West Chino Drive share characteristics similar to the house Alvah Hicks built for his family at 701 Patencio, including a shed-roofed volume at the left of the elevation. Detail from circa 1933 photograph courtesy Mary Kummings and Steve Scott.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE HICKS RESIDENCE

When originally designed and built in 1926, the Hicks Residence was a relatively modest three-bedroom, two-and-a-half bathroom, Spanish Colonial Revival style home with a living room, dining room, kitchen, bathroom, and adjoining maid's room with half-bath. The bedroom wing featured two bedrooms, each with a fireplace and an adjacent sitting room.

From Patencio Road, the primary elevation consisted of a central volume containing the living room. Four square masonry columns, covered in a red-tiled roof, support the front porch. The walls were stucco painted an off-white shade. The house was sited to preserve a large mesquite tree in front. Double French doors lead into the sizable open-beamed living room. Windows throughout were double wooden multi-light casement windows. The rear wall featured a central fireplace with a Moorish-inspired chimney flanked by two pair of French doors leading out onto the rear terrace.

To the north of the living room, the dining room wing had a shed roof covered in terra cotta roof tiles. Behind this were the kitchen, maid's room, and half-bath.

The south bedroom wing had a central hall with a guest bathroom. Each bedroom had its own fireplace and pairs of French doors opening out onto small private patios. The two bedrooms shared a central bathroom. Each bedroom had an adjacent sitting room, one at the front of the house facing Patencio, the other at the rear of the house facing the rear garden.

Changes Over Time

In 1936, the Cranes hired contractors William Marte and his associate HL Hansen (Marte-Hansen) to make additions and modifications to the house. Crane's neighbor Hansen lived just around the corner at 444 West Chino Drive. It isn't known who the designer of these additions were, but they were similar to earlier designs by Hicks, and also like other large estates in the neighborhood. They built a new detached garage structure and converted the existing garage into a guest suite.⁵² Above this, accessed by outdoor masonry stairs, was an open observation deck with a tile-roofed tower. The observation tower design was an Alvah Hicks signature, which inspired others to do the same. Examples can be seen through Old Las Palmas. Two more bedrooms, with a shared bathroom, were added to the south side of the home. These 1936 changes were the most substantial modifications in the home's history.

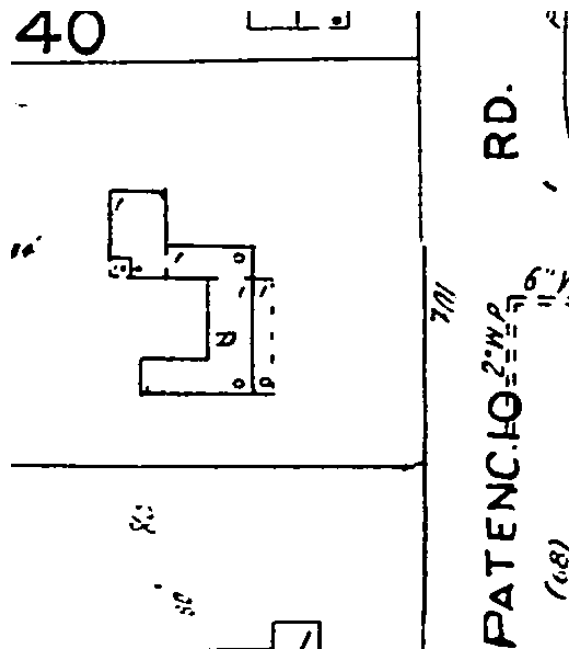
In 1969, new owners Jim and Carole Hicks removed non-load-bearing walls inside the guest rooms in the former garage, to create a larger open kitchen.

In July 1971, a fire broke out at the house, causing \$35,000 in damage.⁵³ At that time, the Hicks family decided to expand the primary bedroom at the rear of the house, and added a fireplace to that bedroom. In 1977, they added a swimming pool.

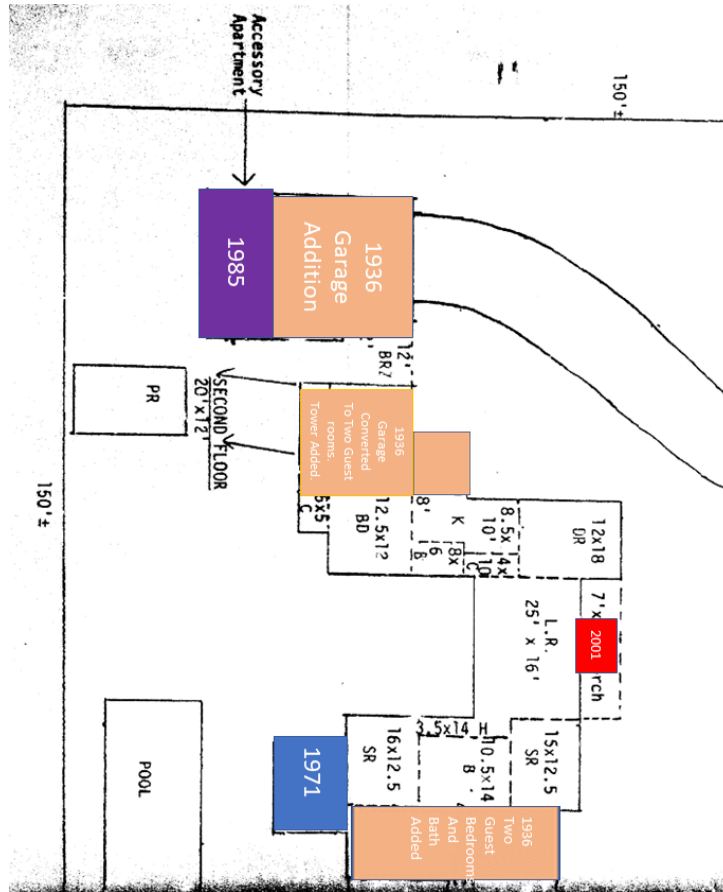
In 1985, a 312-square-foot guest house was added to the back of the garage by the Hicks family.

⁵² "Marte-Hansen Construct Many New Homes," *Desert Sun*, April 9, 1937, 12. The short article lists house and modifications the firm was working on in the desert, and mentioned five guest bedrooms being built for the Cranes.

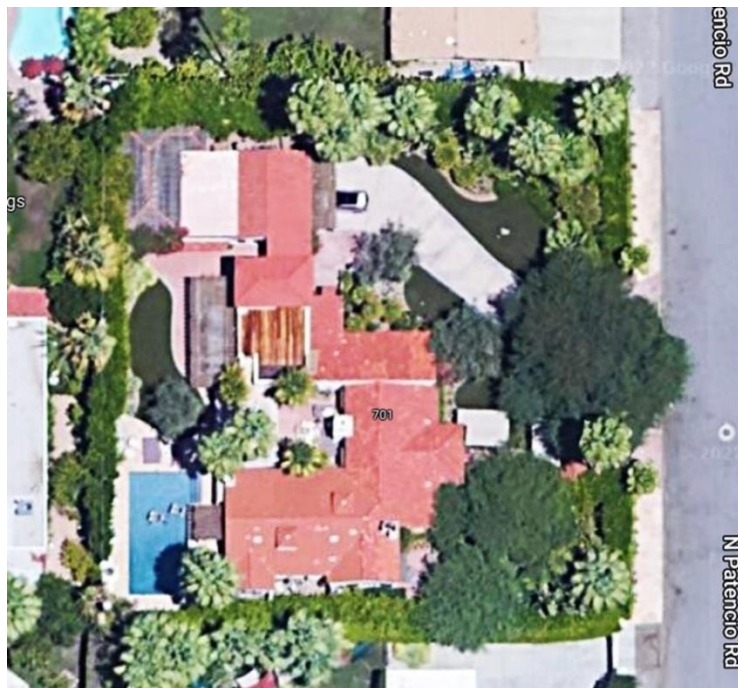
⁵³ "Las Palmas Fire," *Desert Sun*, July 15, 1971, 2.



February 1929 Sanborn Map showing 701 Patencio.



Tan-colored boxes indicate 1936 modifications created for the Crane family, and include a new detached garage, the conversion of the existing garage to a guest suite with observation deck and tower above, and two guest bedrooms and shared bath added to the south side of the home. The blue box indicates a 1971 bedroom addition by Jim and Carole Hicks, and the purple is a 1985 guest apartment added to the rear of the garage by the Hicks family.



Though there is no permit history for a new detached garage in 1936, but in the 1939 aerial, top, the driveway is in the same position as it is today, indicating the new garage was built prior to 1939.



Because foliage obscures much of the front of the house, getting a good establishing photo is difficult. This 2023 photo shows the same shed-roofed dining room wing, and the covered front porch.



The primary façade today, with shed-roofed dining wing showing through foliage at right; original covered front porch; and the later entry addition at center.

In 2001, a new owner, Carol Scaroni, began a multi-year property renovation. New concrete block walls and pilasters, covered in stucco, were added. Covered gates for the porte cochere and pedestrian entrance were also built. These changes enclosed the front of the house affording privacy from Patencio Road.

A new enclosed entrance portico was added over the front door, creating a small entry hall into the living room and removing some open porch areas. It is covered in the same red tiles as the original roof.

A new bathroom was added to the southwest corner of the house, accessible from the outside. This did not change the footprint of the house. Four fountains were built, as well as an outdoor fireplace. A bedroom was deleted in the guest house area within the house's footprint, and another was downsized to create a larger open kitchen/family room with a new fireplace, wet bar, and kitchen island. A new laundry area was also added to this space.

In 2011, a new owner, James Fielding, remodeled the kitchen area and added 183 square feet.

Character-Defining Features of the Hicks Residence

Contributing Elements

- Stucco walls.
- Shed-roofed dining room wing.
- Wooden multi-light casement windows.
- Wooden French doors.
- Rooftop observation deck and tile-roofed tower.
- Mature multi-trunk mesquite tree.
- Exposed wood rafter tails.
- U-shaped configuration.

Non-Contributing Elements

- Perimeter masonry walls, pilasters, intricate brick paving, and porticoes along Patencio Road.
- Later 1971 (expansion of primary bedroom with fireplace) and 1985 (guest suite at rear of detached garage) additions to the rear of the house.
- Tile-roofed entry hall addition from 2001.
- Swimming pool.
- Outdoor fountains and wood pergolas.
- Later replacement S-tile terra cotta roof.

Other Sources Consulted

- Historic Resources Group. *City of Palm Springs Citywide Historic Context Statement & Survey Findings*. Pasadena, 2015 (Final Draft, December 2018).

- Architectural Resources Group. *City of Palm Springs Historic Resources Survey*. San Francisco, 2004.
- Historic Site Preservation Board. *Inventory of Historic Structures*. Palm Springs, 2001.
- www.newspapers.com (*Desert Sun* and *Los Angeles Times*).
- City of Palm Springs (Planning and Building Departments).
- Ancestry.com.
- Palm Springs Historical Society.
- Riverside County Assessor's Office.

BACKGROUND / HISTORIC CONTEXT

The relatively short history of Palm Springs can be organized into several distinct periods, as defined by the Historic Resources Group's *Citywide Historic Context Statement & Survey Findings*. These include the following:

- Native American Settlement to 1969
- Early Development (1884-1918)
- Palm Springs Between the Wars (1919-1941)
- Palm Springs During World War II (1939-1945)
- Post-World War II Palm Springs (1945-1969)

It is within the context of the period "Palm Springs Between the Wars" that Hicks Residence will be evaluated. The following context statement is edited from Historic Resource Group's *Citywide Historic Context Statement & Survey Findings*:

Palm Springs Between the Wars (1919-1941): This context explores the transformation of Palm Springs from a modest spa town into a luxury winter resort in the years between the First and Second World Wars. By 1918 Nellie Coffman and her sons, George Roberson and Earl Coffman, understood the town's potential, not as a health spa for asthmatics and consumptives, but as an exclusive winter resort for the well-to-do, and set about transforming their sanatorium into the luxurious Desert Inn, one of the most renowned hostelries in the country. Their success inspired the development of two equally spectacular hotels in the 1920s and cemented the town's growing reputation as one of the country's premier luxury winter resorts. The Oasis Hotel, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, Jr. (known as Lloyd Wright) opened in 1925 by Pearl McCallum McManus; and the grand Hotel El Mirador, designed by Walker and Eisen in a sumptuous Spanish Colonial Revival style and opened in 1927.

Automobile tourism played an early and important part of the success and growth of Palm Springs as a destination. In 1914, highway bonds were passed in Riverside County for extensive road improvements and construction of new routes. As part of these efforts, the highway connecting Los Angeles and Palm Springs was completed in October 1916. Pavement of the highway through to Indio was completed in 1924, allowing travelers to drive all the way from Los Angeles to Palm Springs in less than four hours, all on paved roads.

The first residential subdivisions were recorded in the early 1920s on tracts largely concentrated on land immediately surrounding the existing village and the resorts. Several tracts were subdivided by Prescott T.

Stevens, along with other prominent early Palm Springs settlers including Pearl McManus, Raymond Cree, and Harriet Cody.

In the 1920s, business tycoons, industrialists, and other wealthy businessmen, along with the Hollywood elite discovered the desert and began to transform Palm Springs into an international resort. While the movie stars primarily stayed at the resort hotels when visiting Palm Springs, other wealthy residents and seasonal visitors started building architect-designed estates and drawing increased attention to the growing resort town.

The 1930s saw Palm Springs blossom, as more and more celebrities made it their winter weekend getaway, and more development sprang up to house and entertain them. By the start of World War II, Palm Springs had so long been thought of as a movie star's playground that some of the neighborhoods were described as "Beverly Hills in the desert." One section was so filled with film notables, the neighborhood was ultimately dubbed the "Movie Colony."

In the 1930s important figures in finance and business continued to flock to the desert in the winter, helping to cement the village's reputation as one of the nation's top winter resort destinations.

Architecturally, the Spanish and Mediterranean-Revival styles were the town's dominant architectural expression during this period. In addition, there are examples of simplified Ranch houses featuring rustic details and board-and-batten exterior walls. Beginning in the 1930s, prominent modernist architects began making significant contributions to the architectural landscape in Palm Springs.

EVALUATION:

Criterion 1 – Significant Events - The resource is associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the nation, state or community: The Hicks Residence is not affiliated with significant events and does not qualify under Criterion 1.

Criterion 2 – Significant Persons - The resource is associated with the lives of persons who made a meaningful contribution to national, state or local history: The Hicks Residence is one of the earliest extant homes from the first residential boom in Palm Springs and was built and owned by one of the city's most important and prominent pioneers, Alvah Hicks. Hicks, in collaboration with Prescott T. Stevens, developed the three individual tracts which now make up the Old Las Palmas neighborhood. Hicks built at least twenty of these early homes here, the Hicks Residence being one of those. Even more importantly, and with the financial help of his friend Tom O'Donnell, Hicks bought the struggling water company, added more resources, and formed the Palm Springs Water Company in the late 1920s, which ensured the growing village would have an adequate supply of water to sustain its new growth. In addition, his grandson James Hicks later bought the house and lived in it for many years. Because of this, the Hicks Residence is significant as a very early house built by one of the town's most important builders, Alvah Hicks, who is regionally significant. In addition, the house was later owned by businessman, philanthropist, ambassador, and diplomat Charles R. Crane and his wife, Cornelia.

Crane is a figure of international importance in his career, and he owned the Hicks Residence when he was busy perfecting new means of growing date palms that had been raised to be pest-free. He championed the Deglet Noor date, which has become the most grown date in the Coachella Valley, partly because of Crane's influence. **As such, the Hicks Residence qualifies under Criterion 2.**

Criterion 3 - The resource reflects or exemplifies a particular period of national, state or local history:

The Hicks Residence, completed in 1926, exhibits many stylistic markers which place it directly in the historic context of the "Palm Springs Between the Wars (1919-1941)" period. The custom-designed and built structure represents a fine example of significant Spanish Colonial Revival architecture for which Palm Springs first became known. Built and owned by a master carpenter, important builder, and Palm Springs pioneer Alvah F. Hicks, the Hicks Residence is an excellent example of one of Palm Springs' earliest residences in one of the earliest tracts developed. As such, the building may be viewed as an essential component of the historical trends that have come to define Palm Springs' image as a world-class resort, i.e., a historical movement that exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history. **The Hicks Residence qualifies for listing as a Class 1 Historic Resource under Criterion 3.**

Criterion 4 - The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of

construction: The Hicks Residence, along with the later additions, was built using simple materials and conventional construction methods. **As such, the Hicks Residence is not noteworthy for its type or construction method and doesn't qualify for listing as a Class 1 Historic Resource under Criterion 4.**

Criterion 5: The resource presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age; or that possesses high artistic value.

Master builder Alvah F. Hicks was one of Palm Springs' earliest builders and an important Palm Springs pioneer. The Hicks Residence is an exemplary representation of an extant example of one of Hicks's custom-built, one-of-a-kind residences, created in the earliest years of the first residential boom in the burgeoning resort town. Later additions for the Crane family were constructed by builders William Marte and HL Hansen, known for their very high-quality construction for high-profile people building houses in the 1930s. Marte-Hansen even built the house designed in 1936 by architects Floyd Brewster and Hiram Hudson Benedict for Alvah and Teresa Hicks in Little Tuscany, as well as most of the other Brewster & Benedict projects built at the time.⁵⁴

As a custom structure built, owned by, and lived in by Hicks, this building rises to a master builder's level. **Therefore, for its distinctive characteristics representing the Spanish Colonial Revival style, the Hicks Residence qualifies as a Class 1 Historic Resource under Criterion 5.**

⁵⁴ Marte-Hansen also built the Colonial House, Palm Springs Theatre, the first Palm Springs City Hall, and Welwood Murray Library. Marte-Hansen built much of Clark and Frey's work of the period.

Criterion 6: That represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. This Criterion was created to address the resources contained within a potential historic district and as such it does not apply to this nomination. **Hence, the Hicks Residence does not qualify under Criterion 6.**

Criterion 7: That has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to the national, state or local history or prehistory. The Hicks Residence is not likely to yield information important to the national, state or local history or prehistory. **Hence, the Hicks Residence does not qualify under Criterion 7.**

SUMMARY: This evaluation finds the Hicks Residence eligible for listing as a Palm Springs Historic Resource under 8.05.070 (C.1.a.) paragraphs (ii, iii, iv, and v) of the local ordinance's seven criteria.

Integrity Analysis (using U.S. Secretary of Interior Standards)

INTEGRITY

Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. To be listed in the local registry, a property must not only be shown to be significant under the criteria, but it also must have integrity. The evaluation of integrity is sometimes a subjective judgment, but it must always be grounded in an understanding of a property's physical features and how they relate to its significance. Historic properties either retain integrity (that is, convey their significance) or they do not. The definition of integrity includes seven aspects or qualities. To retain historic integrity a property will always possess several, and usually most, of the aspects. The retention of specific aspects of integrity is paramount for a property to convey its significance. Determining which of these aspects are most important to a particular property requires knowing why, where, and when the property is significant. The following sections define the seven aspects and explain how they combine to produce integrity.

DESIGN

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. It results from conscious decisions made during the original conception and planning of a property and applies to activities as diverse as community planning, engineering, architecture, and landscape architecture. Design includes such elements as organization of space, proportion, scale, technology, ornamentation, and materials. A property's design reflects historic functions and technologies as well as aesthetics. It includes such considerations as the structural system; massing; arrangement of spaces; pattern of fenestration; textures and colors of surface materials; type, amount, and style of ornamental detailing. ***The Hicks Residence's essential characteristics (original 1926 construction and 1936 modifications) of form, plan, space, structure, and style have survived mostly intact. Similarly, the structural system; massing; arrangement of spaces; pattern of fenestration; and the type, amount, and style of detailing have survived with a large portion intact. Later additions from 1936 were done using the same architectural vocabulary, and quality of construction, as the original structure. A 1985 guest room addition is hidden behind the garage. The***

2001 addition of a red-tiled entry hall has diminished the integrity of the primary façade somewhat but is a relatively minor disruption to the overall integrity of the home.

MATERIALS

Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a period and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. The choice and combination of materials reveals the preferences of those who created the property and indicate the availability of types of materials and technologies. ***The Hicks Residence’s materials successfully represent the best of Spanish Colonial Revival design of the period, with high-quality but simple stucco, tile, wood and glass. Later changes were done using the same materials and quality of construction and are done in such a way as to not negatively impact the overall historic fabric of the original building – the one exception being the entry portico.***

WORKMANSHIP

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory. It is the evidence of artisans’ labor and skill in constructing or altering a building, structure, object, or site. Workmanship can apply to the property as a whole or to its individual components. It can be expressed in vernacular methods of construction and plain finishes or in highly sophisticated configurations and ornamental detailing. It can be based on common traditions or innovative period techniques. Workmanship is important because it can furnish evidence of the technology of a craft, illustrate the aesthetic principles of a historic or prehistoric period, and reveal individual, local, regional, or national applications of both technological practices and aesthetic principles. Examples of workmanship in historic buildings include tooling, carving, painting, graining, turning, and joinery. ***The workmanship of the Hicks Residence consists of very simple but high-quality finishes and materials typical of a structure built by master builder Alvah Hicks, with later additions by Marte-Hansen. These include stucco, masonry, and a red tile roof. The residence continues to express a high degree of period workmanship.***

LOCATION

Location is the place where a historic property was constructed or the place where a historic event occurred. The relationship between the property and its location is often important to understand why the property was created or why something happened. The actual location of a historic property, complemented by its setting, is particularly important in recapturing the sense of historic events and persons. Except in rare cases, the relationship between a property and its historic associations is destroyed if the property is moved. ***The Hicks Residence remains in its original location and therefore qualifies under this aspect.***

SETTING

Setting is the physical environment of a historic property. Whereas location refers to the specific place where a property was built or an event occurred, setting refers to the *character* of the place in which the property played its historical role. It involves *how*, not just *where*, the property is situated and its relationship to surrounding features and open space. Setting often reflects the basic physical conditions under which a property

was built and the functions it was intended to serve. In addition, the way in which a property is positioned in its environment can reflect the designer's concept of nature and aesthetic preferences. ***The setting of the Hicks Residence continues to reflect the original design relationship of site and structure. It is one of several houses built by master builder Alvah Hicks in the first residential building boom in Palm Springs' history, and the original Hicks design was enhanced by the Crane family's modifications in 1936. The mature, monumental mesquite tree remains one of the home's most distinctive features, nearly a hundred years after the house was built.***

FEELING

Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period. It results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the property's historic character. For example, a rural historic district retaining original design, materials, workmanship, and setting will relate the feeling of agricultural life in the nineteenth century. ***The Hicks Residence is sited on a large parcel in the Merito Vista tract. According to Historic Resources Group's Citywide Survey, Merito Vista is significant "due to its early period of development, association with Prescott T. Stevens, unique planning features, and number of architecturally significant homes, it may warrant special consideration in local planning. The district retains the feel of its original 1925 subdivision with its distinctive street pattern of irregular blocks on short intersecting streets, large residential lots, low-density development of single-family houses that are primarily one story in height, and lush landscaping. It retains the character of an early twentieth-century residential development in Palm Springs."*** Accordingly, ***the Hicks Residence retains the integrity of feeling as described in the HRG characterization of Merito Vista.***

ASSOCIATION

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. A property retains association if it is the place where the event or activity occurred and is sufficiently intact to convey that relationship to an observer. Like feeling, association requires the presence of physical features that convey a property's historic character. For example, a Revolutionary War battlefield whose natural and man-made elements have remained intact since the eighteenth century will retain its quality of association with the battle. Because feeling and association depend on individual perceptions, their retention alone is insufficient to support a property's eligibility for the National Register. ***The Hicks Residence is an important example of a custom-designed Spanish Colonial Revival private residence in Palm Springs. Accordingly, it continues its association with a pattern of events that have made a meaningful contribution to the community. As one of the earliest extant contributors to the Old Las Palmas neighborhood, it is an important landmark that helps to tell the history of the earliest phases of the development of Palm Springs. Also, its association with master builder Alvah Hicks reinforces that history.***

INTEGRITY SUMMARY: This integrity analysis confirms that the site and structures of the Hicks Residence still possess seven aspects of integrity. ***Though the Hicks Residence has had some relatively minor updates and changes since the period of significance, the critical character-defining features that help define the structure as a grand, elegant, Spanish Colonial estate of the 1930s remain intact. In summary, the***

Hicks Residence still possesses a high degree of integrity sufficient to qualify for designation as a Class 1 Historic Resource.

APPENDICES

I Owner's Letter of Support

August 19, 2022

City of Palm Springs
Historic Site Preservation Board
3200 Tahquitz Canyon Way
Palm Springs, CA 92262

Dear Preservation Board Members,

As the current owners of **701 North Patencio Road** in the Old Las Palmas neighborhood, we are pleased to support the Class 1 Historic Site designation of our 1926 Spanish Colonial Revival property by the City of Palm Springs.

Accordingly, we have engaged the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, notably Vice President Steven Keylon, to advise and assist with the preparation and submission of all required nomination paperwork and we are grateful for all the work that Steven and the Foundation have done on our and the City's behalf.

Please contact Tom Ellicott or Kevin Palmer at 404-643-6180 or 404.435.8974, respectfully, with any questions.

Sincerely,



Tom Ellicott



Kevin Palmer

III. Building Permits

Note: No building permits prior to 1956 were returned by the city. An article in the *Desert Sun* from 1936 briefly mentions five guest bedrooms being built for the Crane family.

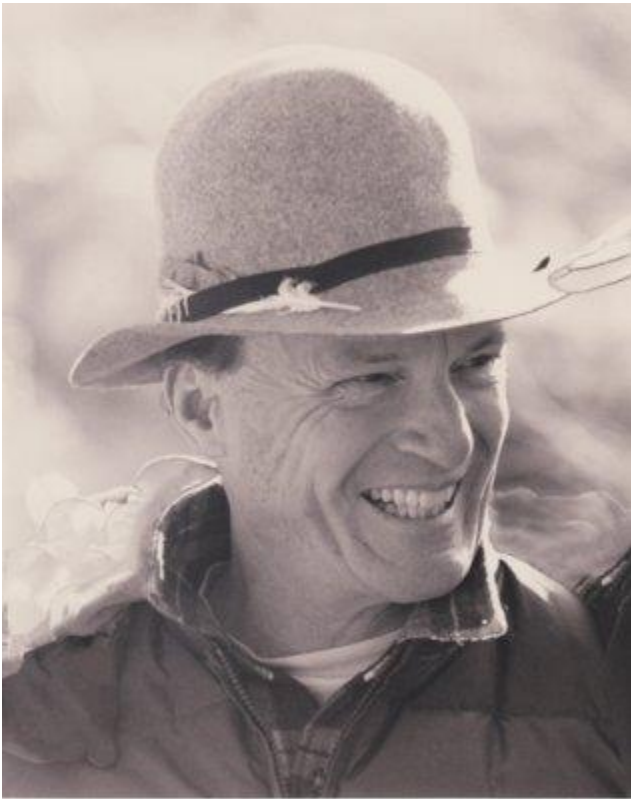
Date	Owner	Permit Type	Description of Work
6-9-56	John Wood	Electrical	1 1 ½ to 10 ton refrigeration unit.
8-3-69	Hicks James	Building	Remodel kitchen to increase internal size by removal of nonbearing partitions. Relocate cooling facility and water heater. Remodel.
8-14-69	James Hicks	Electrical	34 outlets; 11 light fixtures; 1 meter loop; 3 220 volt outlets; 3 all fixed appliances 110 volt.
10-29-69	James Hicks	Mechanical	Install or relocate boiler or compressor.
7-15-71	James Hicks	Building	Repair fire damage to existing single-family dwelling.
8-4-71	James Hicks	Plumbing	1 bathtub; 1 lavatory; 1 shower; 1 water piping; 1 water heater.
8-17-71	James Hicks	Electrical	25 outlets including switch and light outlets.
9-7-77	Jim Hicks	Building	Const 18'x36' conc gunite swimming pool in rear yd. to include therapy pool.
6-12-85	n/a	Planning	Approved plans for an accessory apartment. 312 square feet.
7-2-85	Hicks	Building	Add one electrical outlet and one drain for a modular kitchen unit.
11-28-95	Jim Hicks	Building	Gas repipe. (Swimming pool)
7-11-01	Carol Scarioni	Building	Construct covered portcochere at entry to house. Construct block walls, pilasters, gates and covered entry features at driveway entry and walkway entry. Includes lighting.
12-20-01	Carol Scarioni	Building	In conjunction with permit C 935, build new bathroom on southwest corner of building – major landscape feature remodel, 4 fountains, new masonry exterior fireplace, new 400 amp elec service.
12-20-01	Carol Scarioni	Building	Kitchen and bath remodel.
3-25-03	Carol Scarioni	Building	Remodel of kitchen/family room & bedroom to include new fireplace, wetbar area, & island in kitchen. Delete bedroom 3, and downsize bedroom 4. Includes new laundry area.
6-2-11	James Fielding	Building	Permit to add 183 sq. ft. to existing home and interior remodel per approved plans. Kitchen and bath included. New lighting throughout.

IV. Subsequent Longtime Owners

Ruth Morrison (1943-1969)

In 1943, the estate of Cornelia Crane sold the Hicks Residence to Ruth Morrison. Her husband, Robert Carroll Morrison was born in Texas on February 28, 1878. He married fellow Texan Ruth Wysong (b. 1882) on December 15, 1901. They had four children, James, Ruthyn, Inez, and Robert, Jr. Morrison's World War I draft registration lists him as a bookkeeper. The 1930 census lists the family in Cleveland, where Morrison worked as the secretary for a "motor company." Upon Morrison's retirement, the family moved to Palm Springs around 1937, and the 1940 census lists the family at 294 East Palo Verde in Palm Springs. Robert C. Morrison died in 1964, and his wife Ruth died in 1968. In 1969, the family sold the house to James and Carole Hicks.

James and Carole Hicks (1969-2002)



In 1969, the Hicks Residence was purchased by Alvah Hicks' grandson James and his wife, Carole. Harold James Hicks, Jr. was born October 5, 1934, to Harold J. Hicks (Alvah's son; 1909-1997) and Caroline Birge Hicks (1911-2003). He had three siblings, Jean, Dennis, and Gail. After graduating from Palm Springs High School in 1952, Hicks graduated from Stanford with a degree in liberal arts in 1956. While serving in the Navy (1956-1960), on October 10, 1959, Hicks married Carole Lou McArdle Stanford (b. 1937) in Palo Alto. Upon completing his stint in the Navy, the newlywed couple returned to Palm Springs in 1960 and bought a house

at 1277 S. Riverside in Tahquitz River Estates. The couple had four children: Tim, Steven, Susan, and Sara. Hicks began working for his father's company, Hicks Insurance.⁵⁵

According to his obituary in the *Desert Sun*,

Jim was active in the insurance and real estate brokerage business, first as broker owner of Hicks Insurance, and then as the majority stockholder and president of Eadie Adams Realty Company. Later in his career, he provided consulting services to businesses and investors.

Jim was a lifelong champion of many civic and charitable organizations serving in leadership roles for the Palm Springs Jaycees, the Palm Springs Chamber of Commerce, the Palm Springs Planning Commission, the Desert Water Agency, the O'Donnell Golf Club, the Palm Springs Desert Museum, the Desert Healthcare Foundation, and the Friends of the Palm Springs Library. He was also passionate about serving the needs of the homeless and helped form what became known as the Palm Springs Homeless Task Force to advocate for a full service facility in the west end of the Coachella Valley. Through his tireless efforts and the support of many people, especially former Supervisor, Roy Wilson, he saw the 2009 construction of a shelter that could accommodate as many as 120 homeless persons.

As a member of the Palm Springs Club since the early 1960s, Jim spent lunchtimes honing his Dominoes skills and regularly taking the top prize in tournaments. He was an armchair botanist, and a voracious reader, with a particular love for *The Atlantic*, *The Economist*, historical fiction, and a good thriller mystery. He was also a trailblazer, leading his family and friends on hikes from their cabin in Snow Creek to the falls that cascade down Mount San Jacinto.⁵⁶

Jim Hicks died July 18, 2017. His wife Carole died on January 30, 2018. According to her obituary, "Carole was active in numerous civic and charitable organizations, including leadership roles with the Artists Council of the Palm Springs Art Museum. She was an avid artist and printmaker, creating postmodern works of mixed media on canvas and paper. One of her favorite quotes was, "To paint is to love again," and her passion for art was certainly one of her greatest inspirations. She exhibited regularly in galleries throughout Southern California, and her artwork was often accepted in juried exhibitions at local museums."⁵⁷

Later Owners

After Jim and Carole Hicks sold the house to Carol Scarioni (2002-2007), it was subsequently sold to Toni Anderson (2007-2011) and then again to James Fielding (2011-2018). The current owners, Kevin Palmer and Tom Ellicott, bought the house in 2018.

⁵⁵ "Father and Son Combination for Hicks Insurance," *Desert Sun*, April 29, 1960, 2.

⁵⁶ Harold James Hicks, Jr. obituary. *Desert Sun*, July 2017. (<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/thedesertsun/name/harold-hicks-obituary?id=15314755>)

⁵⁷ <https://www.wiefels.com/obituaries/obituary-listings?obld=2947430>

1936 CONTRACTORS MARTE-HANSEN

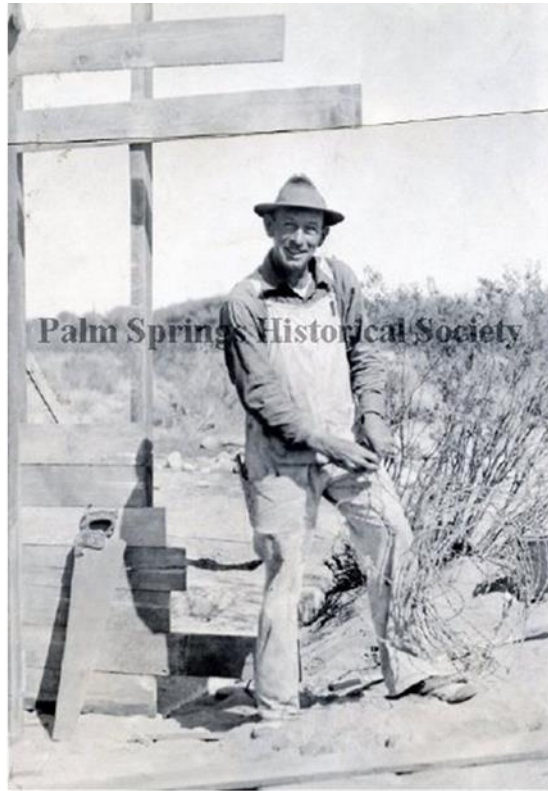
The important changes made by the Cranes in 1936 were built by contractors Marte-Hansen, very important and early carpenters and builders, both of whom arrived in the desert village in the 1920s. For a period in the 1930s, they created a partnership, building some of the most important structures built at the time, by the most notable architects. In the *Desert Sun* on April 9, 1937, it was reported that “Contractor William Marte and his associate, H. L. Hansen, have had a very busy season, and look forward to an even busier summer, judging from the number of building plans that have been submitted to them. They have to their credit some of the better buildings of the village, including the Palm Springs Theatre. Following is a list of some of the structures they have built during the present season,” followed by a list of homes including a Brewster and Benedict-designed home in Little Tuscany for Alvah and Teresa Hicks.⁵⁸ It was noted that both Marte and Hansen, “have conducted successful building operations in Palm Springs since the early days of the village.”

A contractor for over sixty years, William Lee Marti was born February 9, 1887, in Mill Creek, Ohio. His Austrian-born father, Oswald Marti, was a stonemason. William Marti changed the spelling of his name to Marte, and married Henrietta Burger in Kentucky in 1910. They moved to California in 1914, and by 1917 Marte was listed as a carpenter and house builder living in Pasadena. That same year, he built a three-story cliffside home at Moss Point in Laguna Beach for Col. Henry House of Texas.⁵⁹ The Martes moved to the village of Palm Springs in the 1920s, where he began his contracting business, opening an office in the Bunker Building.

Hans Lauritz Hansen was born in Denmark on August 16, 1883. He immigrated to the United States in 1907, and married Erna Udholm in Queens, New York, on November 4, 1909. The couple had two children, Richard (1910-2006) and Reta (1912-2006). By 1918, the Hansens were living in San Francisco, where he worked as a carpenter. In 1925, the Hansen family moved to Palm Springs, where they bought a .65-acre lot in the Vista Acres tract at 444 West Chino Drive. There, Hansen built an elegant Spanish Colonial Revival home, which still stands in mostly original condition. It would serve as a fitting advertisement for his carpentry/homebuilding business.

⁵⁸ Besides five guest rooms for Charles Crane, the other projects listed in the article are: “Herman Fleishman. 4-room residence, John Mell tract. Henry C. Pearson. 7-room stone-tile. Las Palmas Estates. Pert Clark, 7-room stucco. Mr. and Mrs. Dalzell Wilson, 7-room stucco. Mr. and Mrs. A. F. Hicks, 8-room 12-in. stone tile, also 6-room 8-in. stone tile. Little Tuscany. Hill and Wheeler Court. 7 units. John Mell tract. Mrs. Ruth Burnham. 7-room frame, Smoke Tree Ranch. Dr. S. ,1. Miller, 4-room stucco and garage with guest room. John Mell tract. Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Garland, 4-room stucco. La Rambla tract. Mrs. Sarah Levi, stucco duplex, Chino Mesa tract. Herbert J. Carpenter, Sunshine Court, remodeling and 2 new units.” “Marte-Hansen Construct Many New Homes,” *Desert Sun*, April 9, 1937, 12.

⁵⁹ “William Marte...90 Years Old,” *San Bernardino County Sun*, February 13, 1977, B2.



Hans Lauritz Hansen, building his own home in 1926. Courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society.



Stephen Willard photograph of 444 West Chino during construction, circa 1926. Courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society



*H. L. Hansen Residence, 444 Chino Drive. Standing in front are Hans Hansen, his wife Erna, and children Richard and Reta.
Courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society.*

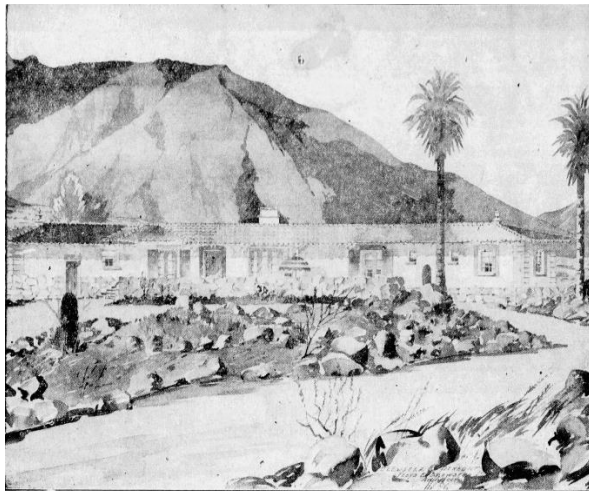


Interior of Hansen Residence at 444 West Chino.

By 1934, Marte and Hansen had entered into a partnership, Marte-Hansen, Contractors, and would build some of the finest structures for architects such as Charles O. Matcham, Paul Laszlo, Brewster & Benedict, and Clark & Frey.

In 1941, they built additions for actor William Powell's house at 383 Vereda Norte. That same year, Marte sold his house in Palm Springs and moved to Banning, before opening a contracting business in San Bernardino. He worked there as a contractor and superintendent of construction until he retired at age seventy.⁶⁰ He died in Fontana on May 29, 1978, at ninety-one.

HL Hansen remained in Palm Springs, working for contractors Wilson-Sorum (Raymond R. Wilson and Raymond M. Sorum) before going out on his own and worked into the 1950s. He died in San Marino on December 27, 1969, at eighty-six. He was buried in Palm Springs.



**BULLOCK'S
DEMONSTRATION HOME**

Designed by
BREWSTER & BENEDICT

FLOYD E. BREWSTER, A.I.A.
Architect

Built by
WILLIAM MARTE
Contractor

H. L. HANSEN, Associate

Located in
"LITTLE TUSCANY"
TRACT

MODEL VILLA
- in -
LITTLE TUSCANY

Complete and Open for Inspection
Starting Saturday, April 8

WE ARE proud
that we were chosen to build
this unique Model Home.

William Marte
GENERAL CONTRACTOR

H. L. Hansen
ASSOCIATE

483 NORTH INDIAN AVENUE

Marte-Hansen built the Bullock's Demonstration Home, designed by Floyd Brewster and Hiram Hudson Benedict, which was the first home in Alvah Hicks' new Little Tuscany subdivision.

⁶⁰ "William Marte...90 Years Old," *San Bernardino County Sun*, February 13, 1977, B2.

V. Contemporary Images



The entry portal to the driveway. This is a non-contributing element created in 2001.



The entry portal to the front door of the home. This is a non-contributing element created in 2001.



An aerial view of the site plan.



An aerial view of the wall and landscaping along Patencio.



Through the gates into the motor court. The original garage and 1936 observation tower can be seen in the distance.



Double doors lead from Patencio Road to the front door of the house. The red tile-roofed entry was added in 2001 and is non-contributing.



The front elevation.



The very old, dramatic mesquite tree predates the Hicks Residence.



From the driveway, Charles and Cornelia Crane's observation tower can be seen.



The original 1926 north elevation, faces the driveway, with the 1936 tower beyond.



The northeast corner of the 1926 portion of the house. Off-white painted stucco walls, wood casement windows, and thin roof elevation covered in red tiles.



The north side of the 1936 Crane guest house at left, with garage wall not seen at right. The gate at rear leads to the 1985 guest room addition at the rear of the garage.



The north façade of the 1926 garage structure.



This indoor entry hall was created in 2001, by adding a new roof and enclosing part of the front porch.



The open-beamed living room.



The dining room.



The bedroom facing east. French doors and wood casement windows are original or compatible replacements.



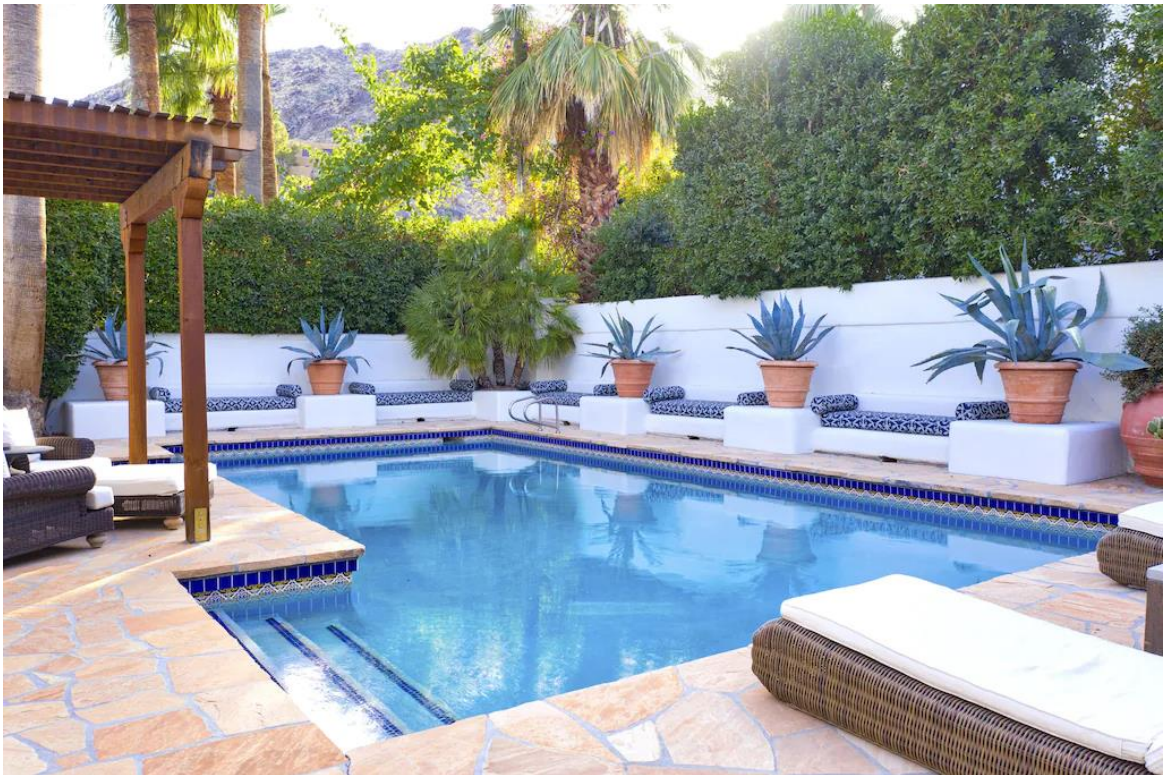
The exterior of the same guest room as above photo. This southeast corner of the house shows the original 1926 features of the Hicks Residence, including stucco walls, wood casement windows, and French doors.



The south façade with equipment hidden by masonry walls.



The Hicks' 1971 primary bedroom addition is near the pool. The 1936 observation tower beyond.



The 1977 swimming pool, added by Jim and Carole Hicks.



The rear elevation of the Hicks Residence. At left is the Crane guest house, with later pergola. The Hicks primary bedroom addition from 1971 can be seen at right.



Sliding glass door and private patio with fountain outside the Hicks' 1971 primary bedroom addition.



French doors lead from the living room into a sheltered outdoor seating area. This area is original to the house's 1926 construction.



Stairs lead to the Crane's observation tower.



The 1936 Crane observation tower, which closely resembles other observation towers typical of homes built by Alvah Hicks during this period.



The 1936 observation deck and tower.



The observation deck and tower.

VI Grant Deed

Branch :O25,User :DESL

Comment:

Station Id :JT5E

DOC #2018-0416168 Page 2 of 3

RECORDING REQUESTED BY:
Kevin L. Palmer

AND WHEN RECORDED MAIL TO:

Mr. Kevin L. Palmer and Mr. Joseph Thomas Ellicott, Jr
2811 Piedmont Road NE
Atlanta, GA 30305

THIS SPACE FOR RECORDER'S USE ONLY:

Title Order No.: **GRANT DEED** Escrow No.:

TRA# 011-003

THE UNDERSIGNED GRANTOR(S) DECLARE(S)
DOCUMENTARY TRANSFER TAX is \$NONE

[X] computed on full value of property conveyed, or
[] computed on full value less value of liens or encumbrances remaining at time of sale.
[] Unincorporated area [X] City of Palm Springs **AND**

FOR A VALUABLE CONSIDERATION, receipt of which is hereby acknowledged,

Kevin L. Palmer and Joseph Thomas Ellicott, Jr. who are married to each other

hereby GRANT(s) to:

Kevin L. Palmer, Trustee of the Kevin L. Palmer Revocable Living Trust dated July 6, 2017 as to an undivided 50% interest and Joseph Thomas Ellicott, Jr., Trustee of the Thomas Ellicott, Jr. Revocable Trust dated July 6, 2017 as to an undivided 50% interest

the real property in the City of Palm Springs, County of Riverside, State of California, described as:
LEGAL DESCRIPTION ATTACHED HERETO AS EXHIBIT "A" AND MADE A PART HEREOF

Also Known as: 701 North Patencio Road, Palm Springs, CA 92262

AP#: 505-291-005-5

Dated September 27, 2018

Kevin L. Palmer
Kevin L. Palmer
Joseph Thomas Ellicott, Jr.
Joseph Thomas Ellicott, Jr.

A notary public or other officer completing this certificate verifies only the identity of the individual who signed the document to which this certificate is attached, and not the truthfulness, accuracy, or validity of that document.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

COUNTY OF Riverside

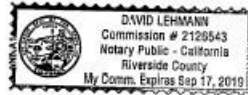
On 10-17-18 before me, David Lehmann A Notary Public personally appeared Kevin L. Palmer and Joseph Thomas Ellicott, Jr. who proved to me on the basis of satisfactory evidence to be the person(s) whose name(s) is/are subscribed to the within instrument and acknowledged to me that he/she/they executed the same in his/her/their authorized capacity(ies), and that by his/her/their signature(s) on the instrument the person(s), or the entity upon behalf of which the person(s) acted, executed the instrument.

I certify under PENALTY OF PERJURY under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing paragraph is true and correct.

WITNESS my hand and official seal.

Signature *David Lehmann*

(Seal)



MAIL TAX STATEMENTS TO PARTY SHOWN BELOW, IF NO PARTY SHOWN, MAIL AS SHOWN ABOVE