

Did Alex Jordan Build The House on the Rock to Spite Frank Lloyd Wright?

Sid Boyum (1914-1991) was a photographer, fisherman, cartoonist, sculptor and long-time friend of Alex Jordan. In 1976 he won the title of “World’s Champion Liar” in the annual Burlington Liars Club national competition. Sid and Alex told many stories and did many things together during their 60+ year friendship. One story they told was about a Packard that they had redesigned and built and when they drove around they told people it had been owned by movie star, Ann Sheridan.

Sid felt Alex should promote himself more and be more like PT Barnum. We believe this is why he told the story about Alex Jordan Sr. taking the plans for Villa Maria to have Frank Lloyd Wright look at them and Frank Lloyd Wright saying “I wouldn’t hire you to design a cheese case for me, or a chicken coop” and revenge for that statement being the reason Alex Jordan Jr. built The House on the Rock. The story also says that Sid Boyum introduced Frank Lloyd Wright to Alex Jordan Senior.

When the story was told shortly after Alex Jordan’s death, we did not have the access to timelines and facts like there is today. When we researched this story, we could find no evidence that this ever happened and we doubt the validity of the story for the following reasons:

The Villa Maria was built in 1923 and it was designed by well-known, Architect Frank Riley and not designed by Alex Jordan, Sr.

Both Sid Boyum and Alex Jordan were born in 1914 and would have been less than 9 years old when this story was to have happened. Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959) would have been over 50 years old and unlikely to have known the 9 year old Sid Boyum.

Frank Lloyd Wright was in Japan working on the Imperial Hotel project from 1916-1922 and would not have likely been in Spring Green when this story was to have happened.

While both men designed highly visited homes in Spring Green, we do not think they ever met or that their paths ever crossed.