

HANTZ HOUSE  
855 Fairview Drive  
Fayetteville  
Washington County  
Arkansas

HABS AR-54  
*HABS AR-54*

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

ADDENDUM TO:  
HANTZ HOUSE  
855 Fairview Drive  
Fayetteville  
Washington County  
Arkansas

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

FIELD RECORDS

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# HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

## Addendum to HANTZ HOUSE

HABS No. AR - 54

**Location:** 855 West Fairview Drive, Fayetteville, Washington County, Arkansas.

The Hantz House is located at latitude: 36.064126, longitude -94.172525  
The coordinate was taken near the front door, in 2012; using Google maps. The Hantz House's location has no restriction on its release to the public.

### **Present Owner**

**/Occupant:** The residence is the property of the Dana Durst Lawrence. However, it is currently being leased out to students at the University of Arkansas.

**Present Use:** Private residence.

**Significance:** Constructed in 1951, this was the first house and built by E. Fay Jones and Ernest E. Jacks. Conceptualized while Jones and Jacks were still students in their final year of architecture school at the University of Arkansas, they rejected the common Beaux Arts style that was still being taught at most architecture schools. Instead, they chose to embrace an avant-garde approach that was slowly being developed within the university. This house has been lauded as one of the purest examples of "Jones being Jones" as he integrates functionality and "and an openness and honesty of materials and design."<sup>1</sup> Both Jones and Jacks' engineering background and eye for detail are clearly on display in this house with the exposed detailed beams. It is also an example of the mid-century modern style that developed as a product of the post-war Modernist movement and is similar to some of the 'Case Study Houses' designed and built in California at about the same time. This house is also significant because it was designed prior Jones meeting one of his lifelong mentors Frank Lloyd Wright and Jacks prior to meeting and working with Edward Durrell Stone.

This house is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

**Historian:** Abigail Charles (BArch, University of Arkansas, 2014), 2012.

### **Project**

**Information:** This recording project was completed by students in their 3rd, 4th, or 5th year of instruction at the Fay Jones School of Architecture at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. Faculty member Gregory Herman instructed the following students in this project: Esteban

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<sup>1</sup> "E. Fay and Gus Jones House, Fayetteville, Washington County," *History & Architecture: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program*. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, n.d. Web.

Ayala-Medel, Morgan Bilger, Abigail Charles, Spencer Curtis, Joseph Davis, Leon Esmaeel, Todd Hansen and Andrew Schalk.

We would also like to credit faculty members Lynn Fitzpatrick and Laura Terry for their assistance in this endeavor.

## **PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

### A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: Construction 1950.

2. Architects: Euine Fay Jones (1921-2004), Ernest Jacks (1921 – present).

3. Original and subsequent owners, occupants, uses: The house was originally owned by the Hantz family (Harold and Katherine Hantz and their two children – Edwin and David) and remained in the family until Harold fell ill. The house was subsequently sold to Dana Durst Lawrence, current owner, who leases the house to students at the nearby university.

4. Builders: Not Available; John Williams oversaw the construction.

5. Original plans and construction: The original designs for the house showed a simple orthogonal, almost-L-shaped configuration with two floors. This version designated storage (and space for the furnace) on the same level of the driveway and was integrated into the slope of the site. The second floor was the main occupiable space of the house. Jones collaborated on the design of the house with classmate Ernest Jacks, who focused on structuring the house, while still in school. The final design was completed prior to their graduation; however construction didn't begin until after they had both left the University to pursue different career paths (Jones going on to Rice University and Jacks going to Little Rock to work with Edward Durell Stone). Most of the major design ideas were maintained; however some things were changed out of respect for the financial restrictions of the clients or for more technical reasons.

6. Alterations and additions: The house was designed in the most functional way possible as part of the Modernist movement that was being nurtured after World War II. There is also something to be said for the architects of the time that influenced both Jones and Jacks; they were both exposed to the designs of Edward Durell Stone and Craig Ellwood. This was a design ideology that the Hantzes appreciated.

In the original design, a round flue was specified; this however had to be replaced by a square one for technical reasons. To Jones and Jacks, the round form was significant due to the fact that it helped to balance the square form of the chimney as well as eliminating the axiality of the site. At the time, due to the concrete and asbestos mixture that was being utilized to obtain the round form, the flue would have exploded on heating. As such, a more suitable mixture was selected and a square flue was utilized.

To help combat the overall deterioration of the house, Dana Durst Lawrence (current owner) has had to make some renovations. When the roof started leaking, she had it replaced. It is now a roll roof with Styrofoam insulation. Also, because of the water damage to the floor, the original wood floors were replaced with a different tongue and groove wood decking. On the exterior, the vertical members of the seat-railing were spaced 6-0" on center (two 2x4 posts were used). Due to their overall deterioration, they were replaced by a single 4x4 post with the same spacing.

The house was also originally constructed such that the main living area as well as the deck off of this space would be cantilevered. This was done using floor joists dimensioned at 4-0" to the North and 6-0" to the South and were constructed of #1 Douglas fir. These however had to be replaced, when the deck began to rot, by David Hantz (around the mid-1980s). At his father's request, they chose to use columns and beams to restructure these areas as opposed to re-cantilevering them.

Two window installed air conditioning units have also been added to the house to accommodate the subsequent tenants. In the original design, the glass wall on the Eastern façade was also designed to be continuous. At this point, it would culminate with the door access that would coincide with the landing for the stairs from the lower level. This however was changed at the Hantzes request in order to facilitate the placement of one of the son's (Edward's) piano. As a result, the doors were offset 6-0" from the bathroom's wall, its current location.

There were also plans to include a larger master bathroom off of the master bathroom (where the current smaller deck is located). Again at the Hantzes request, this was removed from the project for budgetary reasons. The design was the changed to provide access to what was made a deck from the children's bedroom. There were also plans to have a garden wall along the front of the house constructed of local fieldstone. One can interpret this as Jones attempting to include natural elements in the design, which would later on become one of his signature design elements. This however was eliminated due to the budgetary restrictions imposed by the Hantzes.

#### B. Historical Context:

Euine Fay Jones was born on January 31st, 1921, during the Great Depression in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. As a family, they moved from Pine Bluff, to Little Rock and finally settled in El Dorado. It was there that Jones' father opened up a small restaurant that he and his mother worked in – developing a particular family oriented work ethic in the younger Jones. While it doesn't appear that he had much time to draw (even though his talent was realized from an early age) he did however have time to build. He would take whatever scrap materials he could and combine them to create an elaborate tree house. Fay Jones' first eye opening encounter with architecture happened on a visit to a movie theatre which was adjacent to his parents' restaurant. It was there that he saw a short "Popular Science" film on the Johnson's Wax headquarters in

Racine, Wisconsin – in his mind art and building became one and the realm of architecture had acquired another dimension.<sup>2</sup>

In 1938, Jones enrolled at the University of Arkansas and signed up for the civil engineering program. After only being able to complete two and a half years in college, he applied (for the second time) to the Navy as a test pilot. He completed the flight training and was stationed in San Francisco, California (an experience that would later expose him to designers such as Richard Neutra, Walter Gropius, and his Modernist ideas, and Frank Lloyd Wright, who would later become one of his biggest influences). Having completed this tour, Jones returned to the University of Arkansas.<sup>3</sup>

Ernest Jacks would come to the University of Arkansas under similar circumstances. After completing high school in December 1943, he had only completed a year at community college before leaving to fight in World War II as a test pilot. After completing his tour, Jacks decided to move to Jonesboro and from there to Fayetteville in 1947 in hopes of joining either the Aeronautical or Architectural engineering programs. In the end, the University made his decision for him, by cancelling the Aeronautical program. While touring, Jacks was also exposed to the architecture that California had to offer, and people like Craig Ellwood and Edward Durell Stone would come to influence his ideas on design. While in school, both Jacks and Jones had the opportunity to meet and acquaint themselves with architects like Edward Durell Stone and Frank Lloyd Wright who would later become their respective mentors.

After World War II, there was an influx of students and faculty and as a result, the University needed to find a place to house them. The Armed forces gave their now unnecessary barracks away in an effort to help meet the needs of the University. Eventually, there was a decision to tear these barracks down and build more permanent structures for the students, this however left the faculty on their own to find housing of their own. It was here that dean John Williams presented them with the opportunity of designing the house for Philosophy department head Harold Hantz and his family. Williams assured Hantz that they were two of his most talented senior students, and given the fact that they were still students, the overall cost would be cheaper. The design was completed before the two graduated; however construction didn't begin until after they had already left the University to pursue other ventures (Jones going to attend Rice University and Jacks going to work with Edward Durell Stone). As a result, they left the construction of the house up to their professor and mentor John Williams.

After the design was completed, Harold Hantz had to go in search of the funds to finance building the house (something that he was very explicit about – the cost should not exceed \$10,000). As a World War II veteran and as the head of the Philosophy department, he approached the FHA for a loan and after looking at the plans, they refused since the plan was so “radical.” After going to every other Savings and Loan he could, he approached George Shelton – President of First National Bank who gave him a personal loan for \$6000. The remaining

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Adams Ivy, Jr., *The Architecture of E. Fay Jones, FAIA* (Washington, DC: The American Institute of Architects Press, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

\$4000 was obtained by borrowing from his life insurance policies. When the house was finally built, it cost him a total of \$9800.

Since neither of the original designers was around to oversee construction, some of the structural elements had to be adjusted on site to accommodate factors like the terrain by John Williams. As a whole, it was the goal of the Hantzes to have a house that could be designed and completed as quickly and efficiently as possible. Construction began in the summer 1950 and the Hantz family was able to move into their new home later that same year.

From its completion to the day the Hantzes' son David and his family stopped living there in 1965 the house overflowed with activity. This was mostly to do with the family's involvement in the post-World War II resurgence at the University of Arkansas. Given Harold Hantz's position as the Chairman of the Philosophy Department and Katherine Hantz's role as Head Reference Librarian, the two were a wealth of information to all. As such, Harold made his house open each Tuesday night for colloquium; an event that would carry on for the better part of twenty-five years. With Katherine's involvement in groups such as the Modern Literature Club (President) and League of Women Voters, the opportunities to have cocktail parties and meetings at the Hantz House were innumerable. Most guests viewed this modest house and specifically the main room as an "inviting and intimate space." On a personal note, this house would facilitate son Edwin's piano practices (he was a concert pianist till he left for college) as well as childhood adventures in the backyard.

Jones would later go on to teach with the architect Bruce Goff at the University of Oklahoma for two years. From there, he would return to Fayetteville with his family and teach at the University of Arkansas' school of Architecture in 1953; he would then establish his firm Euine Fay Jones, Architect a year later. It is here that Jones would design many of the projects that would earn him international recognition. Frank Lloyd Wright was a big influence in Jones' work both in principle and design methods, he treasured Wright's understanding of nature and the building needing a relationship to the ground and sky. This is not to say however that this dictated Jones' design aesthetic, over time, he was able to incorporate what he'd learnt from Wright into his own thinking and put forth designs that were truly his own.

Jacks would go on to work with architects such as Edward Durell Stone on projects such as the University of Arkansas Medical Center (1952) and Carlson Terrace (1957). It was Stone's desire and eventual trust in Jacks that would lead him to have Jacks in charge of his Fayetteville office. Jacks was also the opportunity to work with the architect Craig Ellwood in 1953, there he helped in the construction of three of Ellwood's case study houses. According to Jacks, Ellwood taught him about the significance of detailing and Stone taught him that detail meant nothing; it was about the space that you created. Like Jones, Ernest also returned to the University of Arkansas to serve as Associate Dean to the School of Architecture in 1956.<sup>4</sup> It is clear that between these main influences and the other design ideas that he was exposed to throughout his career that Jacks was also able to find a voice of his own.

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<sup>4</sup> University Faculty, University of Arkansas, n.d., website accessed 14 June 2012.

Both of their works have been published in major architectural magazines and both have designed many projects in the Arkansas area. Jones designed projects for faculty and former classmates, and eight properties from these commissions are currently listed on the National Register for Historic Places.

## **PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION**

### A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: The Hantz residence is one of the earliest examples of architect Fay Jones' design aesthetic, an artistically engineered design that reflected the nature of the site. Jones' partiality for tree houses as a child, and which influenced much of his later work, can be seen in this project as well. Most of the views out are either framed by simulating the feeling of living atop a tree canopy.

This house also complies with the Jones' design ideology, that architecture should be "economical, practical ... simple and honest" by expressing the structure and materiality of the house honestly and openly.<sup>5</sup> Wood columns and beams remain exposed and generally lightly treated, as was expected in Modern architecture in general, but also specifically to Arkansas. The combination of these two ideas is a clear demonstration of the organic architecture that would later be recognized as Jones' characteristic style.<sup>6</sup>

2. Condition of fabric: The condition of the house has changed over time as a result of weathering and general use. It has also had to deal with external factors such as the continual settling of the site as well as the residual effects of being built on a drained creek (due to a swell of road construction in the area). Since the purchase of the house by Dana Durst Lawrence, maintenance work has been done to the house however; there are still areas of the house in need of repair. Water damage and issues with humidity can be seen throughout the house (as well as attempts to control this such as caulking leaky joints). Water damage can also be seen on the roof of what was once the master bedroom (the roof has since been replaced, but is still an occasional problem). Additionally, the wood siding of the house has been painted in an effort to protect from further weathering and attack from termites.

### B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: The Hantz Residence is a single-story private home. The house is approximately 50' long and 32' wide. It is approximately 17-3" in height. Like most of Jones' later work, the house demonstrates his ideas on "scale, balance and adapting the building to its site" in the way that the house is positioned on the site, as well with how the elements of the house are proportioned with respect to itself and its surroundings.

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<sup>5</sup> Ivy, 19.

<sup>6</sup> Ivy, 68.

2. Foundation: The perimeter wall at the basement/carport level of the house was constructed out of standardized concrete blocks.

3. Walls: On the basement/carport level, concrete blocks are used to anchor the house to the hill at the Northern exposure of the house. This attempt to integrate the base of the house with the surrounding topography is clearly an attempt to signify an organic experience on that floor. On the main floor of the house, the board and batten siding used again conjures up/demonstrates the tree house imagery that Jones' employed throughout his career.

4. Structural system, framing: Structurally, the house is supported by the concrete blocks (of the base and the chimney), as well as the wooden floor joists used throughout the house. In the main living area, the structure is seen with the exposed wooden columns and beams as well as with the primary structural walls of the house.

5. Balcony: The balconies of the house are constructed of a wood beam and joist system and are revealed only on the South face of the house. The balustrade (originally an assembly of two 2x4 members, and replaced by a single 4x4 member spaced approximately 6-0") in conjunction with an attached wire mesh acts as the guardrail for the balcony. This is capped by 2x6 members approximating 5-0" in length which were without articulation. Jones' intent for this was that the cap could also be utilized as seating space (which accounts for the overall height of the balustrade – sitting at 2-2").

6. Chimney: The chimney is offset to the Eastern side of the house and is constructed of concrete blocks. It is the main focal point of the major living spaces of the house and as such services the living room, dining room and kitchen.

## 7. Openings

a. Doorways and doors: There are three doorways (totaling four doors) separating the interior of the house from the exterior. Street access is gained through a wooden door on the Northern exposure house. At this entrance, there is also a screen door which according to the current owner was included to facilitate cross ventilation. The second and third doors are located along the Southern exposure of the house; and are similar to the first only in that there are screen doors as well. These doors however, are made with glass so as not to interrupt the continuous glass wall along the Southern façade. The fourth and final exterior door is located off of the designated children's bedroom and allows access to the smaller balcony on the South-Western side of the house.

b. Windows: Large panes of glass with a few wooden mullions comprise the majority of the southern façade at the main occupancy level. These panes then fit into the wood structural system of the house (i.e., are integrated into the column and beam system visible along this

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façade). The remaining operable windows are standard casements. The cantilevered roof acts as an overhang to shade the balcony below it. There are also two large panes of glass on either side of the chimney which provide views out to the East as well as allowing light to filter into the room later on in the evening.

8. Roof: The roof at present is a combination of Styrofoam insulation and roll roofing.

9. Stairway: The only staircase for the house is situated along the Southern exterior side of the house and connects the driveway level of the house to the main level. It runs parallel to the main balcony and was constructed using similar materials; with the posts being 4x4 wood members with wire mesh connecting from one post to the next adjacent post. The risers are 0'7" and the treads are 3'6".

### C. Description of Interior

#### 1. Floor plans

a. Driveway level: On the driveway level, the design of the house encompassed the driveway as well as what was originally to be used as storage. Both of these elements were integrated into the hillside and to allow one to experience the surrounding topography. At this level, it would appear that not much room was given over to functions other than parking the car and storing whatever needed to be put away as the ceilings are especially low in these areas 5-9". Having parked a car, one then entered the house through the doors on the glass Southern exposure. The driveway has since been blocked off; initially due to the fact that the steep slope made it difficult to park one's car. The continued settling of the land has also made the construction of a low retaining wall necessary thereby blocking off what would have been the driveway. The storage area presumably had a small window presumably to allow some light as well as to allow air to circulate within the space and the lone door was a standard wooden door. The furnace of the house is also located in this area. These walls were constructed entirely out of the same concrete block that is used for the fireplace of the house.

b. Main Floor: There are two methods of entering this level, on the Northern face from the street or on the Southern face assuming that one had used the driveway. Both means of access lead you into the primary space of the house (the living, dining and kitchen area). The main large open living space was noted as having housed a piano along the West wall; an item that forced Jones to change the doors' original location from being at the very end of the wall to its current location. This space also contains a built-in bench (designed by Jones) and the fireplace which becomes the main focal point of the room. The relationship of the fireplace to the rest of the house was the proposal for interrupting the axiality of the site. The varying roof heights on the exterior are expressed on the interior and as such, the opportunity to have a lowered soffit with ambient lighting was created. The sole bathroom, three bedrooms and single pantry are also on this level. The more private areas of the house (bathroom and bedrooms) are all located to the Western side of the house while the more public/shared spaces are all centered around the living area on the Eastern side. All of the rooms excluding the pantry allow for views to the exterior as

well as the tree canopy, which helps to emphasize the tree house theme that Jones and Jacks preferred.

2. Flooring: The flooring of the house is oak tongue and groove strip flooring, replacing the original oak strip flooring.

3. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls of the house appear to be predominantly composed of standard gypsum board. There are two different ceiling heights and this seems to bear a relationship on the materials that are expressed within the room. The main living area as well as the bathroom has Douglas-fir wood panels at an overall height of approximately 9'-0". This height difference (as well as the inclusion of a small window), especially in the bathroom was done so that the room would seem larger than it actually was. The lower roof however, covers the more private rooms (the bedrooms) and the kitchen area at approximately 8'-0" and is gypsum board as well. In the kitchen area, this shift in height was used to incorporate a soffit that would allow for ambient lighting.

#### 4. Openings

a. Doorways and doors: Due to the overall open nature of the plan of this house, there are very few doors on the interior of the space. Flush solid wood doors are used on the bathroom and all of the bedroom doors. The doors are framed with the same wood as the doors throughout the interior of the house. Aside from this, there are doors leading to the pantry as well as a small closet as one enters the house from Fairview Drive.

b. Windows: One of the main design ideas was to have the windows serve as a means of cross ventilation for the interior of the house. The window in the bathroom, in conjunction with the ceiling height, was used to make the space seem bigger than it was. These windows were otherwise used to provide views out to the surrounding nature and as such underscored the tree house theme. These attributes are used especially in the main living space with windows on three of the main façades.

5. Decorative features and trim: The decorative elements of the interior of the house are a direct result of the materials used to construct it (an idea supported by the Modernist movement of the time). The wood on the interior of the house, while exposed, was detailed in such a way that using other decorative elements would be unnecessary. They were, however, stained in an effort to help protect them from overall wear and tear, in addition to keeping the overall color-scheme of the house neutral. The soffit in the kitchen (in conjunction with the two columns present) was used to delineate a hierarchy in the spaces and as such signal a change in the use of the room.

6. Hardware: The hardware on the exterior screen doors were simple handles, while the wooden doors had round knobs. Similar thin handles are also seen again on the kitchen cabinetry. All of these knobs and handles were made of metal (presumably brass). The only other handles in the house can be seen in the bedroom. The concave handles used on the bedroom dressers, were

made of wood while the closet door pulls appear to be made of the same metal as seen on the exterior of the house.

#### 7. Mechanical Equipment

a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: The house uses central, gas-fired, forced-air heating.

b. Lighting: Natural lighting through large floor-to-ceiling glazing on the east façade offers most of the direct light in the house. Throughout the main living space and the more enclosed rooms, Jones and Jacks used mainly ambient lighting fixtures. There are few sources of direct light in the house most of which are recessed as seen in the bedrooms and kitchen.

c. Plumbing: The house is plumbed conventionally and is connected to the municipal water and sewer system. The house has one bathroom, with toilet, tub and sink.

8. Original Furnishings: Throughout their careers, Fay Jones and Ernest Jacks often designed custom furnishings for their projects. The Hantz Residence has a few original furnishings that are still in the house. On the main living floor, the recessed lighting fixtures in the bedrooms and kitchen still remain. The kitchen cabinets were also originally designed by Jones and Jacks. The other main design element that hasn't been changed is the structural framing elements of the house – the columns and beams. On the exterior, the banister of the balcony was custom designed to reflect the column and beam connections, this no longer remains intact due to the weathering and overall deterioration.

#### D. Site

1. Historic landscape design: The property measures approximately 127'-0" x 96'-0". Harmon Avenue defines the Eastern boundary of the site. On this site, the terrain slopes downward towards the South and East property lines. There is a sharp drop off to the South of the site, which is currently the location of the extension of the nearby walking trail. When the house was built in 1950, there were few trees on the site. This allowed for a clear view out to the surrounding landscape. Since then, the landscape has been allowed to develop and be overgrown with little interference; as such the surrounding trees block the view of the house as well as to the outside landscape.

2. Outbuildings: No other buildings exist on the Hantz property.

### **PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

#### A. Architectural drawings and Early Views:

Fay Jones Collection. Special Collections. University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

## B. Interviews

Hantz, David. Interview by Abigail Charles and Joseph Davis. 13 Jun 2012.

Jacks, Ernest. Interview by Abigail Charles and Joseph Davis. 8 Jun 2012.

Durst-Lawrence, Dana. Interview by Abigail Charles, Joseph Davis. 29 May 2012.

## C. Selected Sources

### Primary Sources

Original Hantz Residence Drawings. Fay Jones Special Collection. Special Collections. University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Hantz Residence Snapshots taken in 1951. Fay Jones Special Collection. Special Collections. University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville, Arkansas

### Secondary Sources

Ivy, Robert Adams, Jr. *The Architecture of E. Fay Jones, FAIA*. Washington, D.C.: The American Institute of Architects Press, 1992.

"E. Fay and Gus Jones House, Fayetteville, Washington County." *History & Architecture: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program*. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, n.d. Web. [http://www.arkansaspreservation.com/historic-properties/\\_search\\_nomination\\_popup.aspx?id=1138](http://www.arkansaspreservation.com/historic-properties/_search_nomination_popup.aspx?id=1138). (accessed 29 May 2012).

*Sacred Spaces: The Architecture of Fay Jones*. DVD. Directed by Larry Foley and Dale Carpenter. 2009; Fayetteville, AR: Fay Jones School of Architecture University of Arkansas Press, 2009.

White, Mel. "The Master Builder: Fay Jones of Fayetteville Emerges As One of the World's Leading Architects." *Arkansas Times*, October 1983, pp 52-65.

"University Faculty." *University Faculty*. University of Arkansas, n.d. Web.(accessed 14 June 2012).