In March of 1967, archaeologists directed by LSU’s Dr. William G. Haag conducted salvage archaeological investigations at the Monte Sano Bayou site (16EBR17). Dr. Carl Kuttruff, a former student of Haag’s and, at the time, a graduate student at Southern Illinois University, assisted with the investigations. This site contained two conical earthen mounds that were mechanically excavated before the site was destroyed for the construction of an industrial plant. A nearby midden area yielded artifacts from several periods of prehistoric and historic occupation.

These investigations determined that the mounds had complex stratigraphy, especially Mound A, and that prehistoric construction of the mounds dated to the Middle Archaic period (6000-2000 B.C.). Radiocarbon dates from samples obtained from Mound A at the site indicate that it is the earliest known prehistoric mound in North America. Radiocarbon dates for Mound B also point toward a Middle Archaic period construction, although hundreds of years later. Both Haag and Kuttruff presented information on Monte Sano at professional meetings and wrote short reports about the site. However, both passed before they could complete a comprehensive narrative about Monte Sano.

Fortunately, Carl’s widow, Jenna Kuttruff, provided access to Haag and Kuttruff’s work to Dennis Jones, editor for the Louisiana Archaeological Society (LAS). Joining with Sam Brookes and John Connaway, recognized for their knowledge of the Middle Archaic period in the Lower Mississippi Valley, Jones completed Haag and Kuttruff’s account of the site and provided an analysis of the artifacts recovered during the 1967 field season. Access to the artifact collection was made possible by the generous cooperation of Dr. Rebecca Saunders of the LSU Museum of Natural Science.

Dennis Jones was born in Little Rock, AR and raised in Memphis, TN. After experiencing an epiphany with a lithic scatter in his grandfather’s plowed field near Forrest City, Arkansas, he pondered a career in archaeology. Despite being relatively sober for most of his life, he pursued that career anyway. With a B.A. from Washington University in St. Louis and a M.A. from LSU, he has worked as an archaeologist in many places: Mexico, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Florida, Texas, Louisiana, and even exotic Mississippi. A longtime LAS member, he now has the dubious honor of being the editor for the society for which he oversees the LAS newsletter and the LAS bulletin, Louisiana Archaeology. The volume regarding the Monte Sano site has easily been the most involved of all the bulletins he has put together.

Wednesday, October 30, 2019, 7pm
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