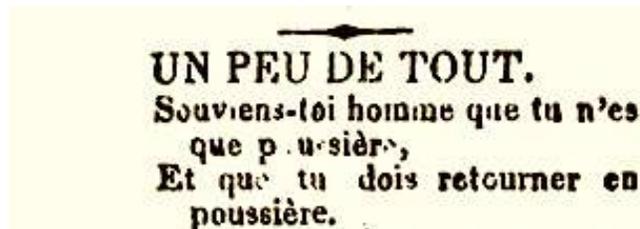


Un Peu de Tout

"*Un Peu de Tout*" is a French expression meaning "A Little Bit of Everything" or "A Little Bit of This and A Little Bit of That".



The phrase appeared in the headline shown above in the *Louisiana State Gazette*, on February 21, 1822.

In the assorted tales that follow, I hope to offer the reader just "a little bit" of the treasure trove that is Louisiana history and culture. The first significant "bit" begins at the beginning, with René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, who claimed Louisiana for France, naming the Mississippi basin *La Louisiane* in honor of the Sun King, Louis XIV.



La Salle claims La Louisiane for France

In addition to the birth of Louisiana, Louis XIV's reign (1643 – 1715) also saw the beginning of a new manner of conducting oneself. It was called "*étiquette*" and it had its origins at Versailles when King Louis's groundskeepers wanted everyone traipsing around to "keep off the grass."

It's hard to believe that table manners and when to say "How do you do?" or "Please" and "Thank you" came about on the impeccable grounds and gardens of Versailles, but that's exactly how it happened.



The Orangerie in the gardens of the Palace of Versailles

The word *étiquette* originates from the French words *estiquet(te)*, meaning "label" or "tag," and *estiquer* meaning "to stick." Scholarly etymologists believe the word's current usage emerged while Louis XIV was king of France. After one of the Sun King's gardeners grew irritated by all those nobles running roughshod across the beautifully manicured grounds and gardens, he put up small signs, or *étiquets*, warning people to stay off the grass.

The English word "ticket" comes from the same source. It evolved in the early 16th century as a "short written note" or "a license or permit"), a shortening of the obsolete French *étiquet*, from the Old French *estiquet(te)*, from *estiquier*, meaning "to fix," from the Middle Dutch *steken*.

Back in France, it wasn't long before *Louis Quatorze* himself issued orders calling for everyone to heed the *étiquets* placed about by his gardeners. Later cards were distributed that outlined proper behaviors, ceremonies and rules to be observed at court, and, before long, in diplomatic circles. This led to etiquette's modern definition as a customary code of behavior that enumerates expectations on how one should act according to contemporary conventional norms among members of a particular profession, social class or group.



Polouse Interdite, s'il vous plait (Keep Off The Grass, Please)

British diplomat Lord Chesterfield is presumed to have been the first to have used the word *etiquette* in an English language document in 1750, in a letter written to his son Philip, who was visiting Rome. Chesterfield, who had spent some time at the French court, wrote that should Philip encounter the Pope, he should "without hesitation kiss his slipper or whatever else the etiquette of that court requires," or, in other words, "when in Rome, do as the Romans do."

If only La Salle's men had just an ounce of etiquette. On March 19, 1687, during a final expedition to locate the Mississippi River, La Salle was shot and mortally wounded by his own men. Pierre Duhaut fired the fatal shot and Jean L'Archevêque was the decoy for the ambush.

Stripped of all his clothing and jewelry, La Salle was left to die where he fell, somewhere in Texas.

Another activity that required a set of rules was the sport of baseball. In 1845, Alexander Cartwright, who was a member of New York City's Knickerbocker Club, known as the father of modern baseball, is believed to have led the codification of the so-called Knickerbocker Rules. Later research has shown that the "Laws of Base Ball" were written in 1857 by Knickerbocker's President Daniel "Doc" Adams establishing the rules of the game, including nine innings with nine players on a field of 90-foot basepaths.

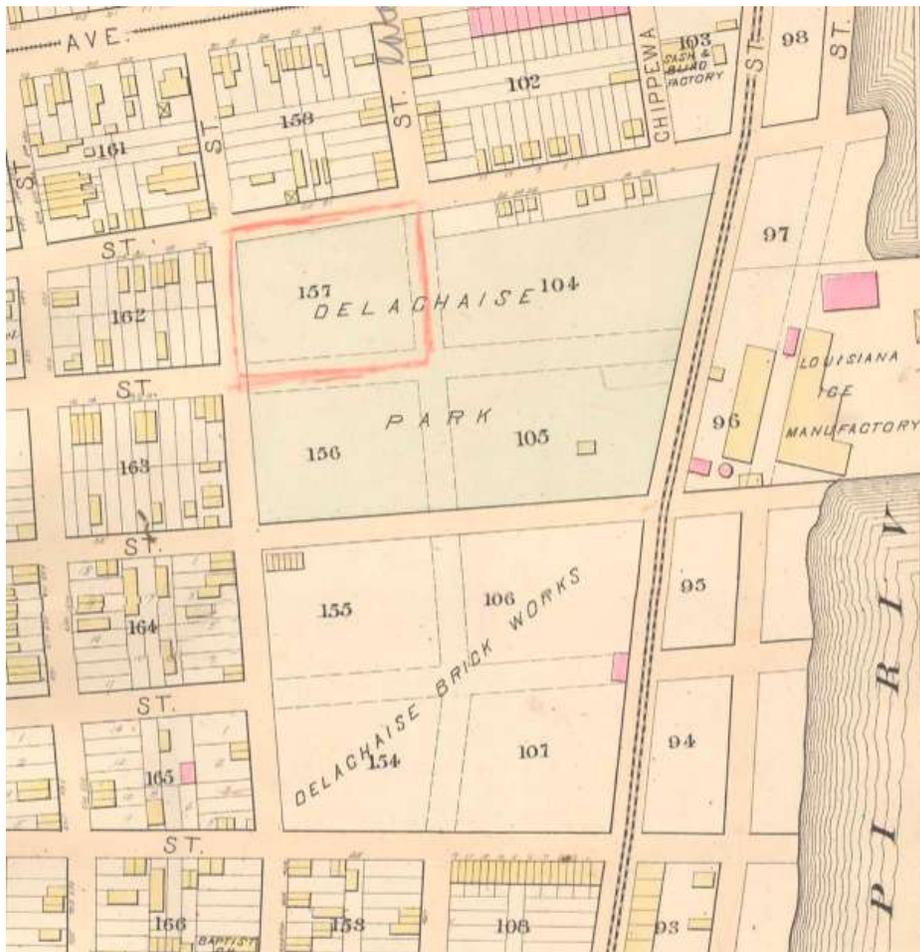


Early Base Ball, lithograph by Currier & Ives

All of this brings us up to the year 1859, a momentous one for baseball in New Orleans, a boom year in which seventy-five young men came together in July to form seven teams that comprised the Louisiana Base Ball Club. The first games were played in August at Delachaise Park and one team (captained by Charles W. Pescay) went up against a second team (captained by J. H. Jones). Pescay was victorious in the first game in the match, but "Jones's party were found to stand ten ahead" at the end of the game on August 12, reported the *Picayune* the following day.

The Crescent City was gung ho on baseball in those pre-Civil War days. New Orleans baseball historian Derby Gislair states that before the war even began, "5 percent of the members of the National Association of Professional Base Ball Players were from New Orleans."

Delachaise Park was located a block from Louisiana Avenue, bounded by Tchoupitoulas, Foucher, Laurel and Delachaise streets. "A large tent was pitched under the live oaks for the ladies," reported the Picayune on August 13, 1859. The "stars and stripes" waved over the tent as did "a beautiful burgee, bearing the inscription, 'L. B. B. C.," the handiwork of some of the fair friends of the Club."



Location of Delachaise Park, Robinson's Atlas

The New Orleans *Sunday Delta* announced additional "grand matches" on September 11, 1859, at Delachaise Park, "one of base ball and two of cricket." The article announced that the "first match of base ball ever played between opposition clubs in New Orleans" was "to be

contested by the Empire and Louisiana clubs, the former having challenged the latter." The contest was to be played the following Wednesday. The Empire Club had as its captains local bookseller Alex Dapremont and railroad paymaster Benjamin Chandler. The Lone Star Base Ball Club was also organized in New Orleans in 1859, on September 15th, with William F. Tracey as president.



Early Baseball

Also mentioned in the *Sunday Delta* was "the return match between the Crescent City and Pelican Cricket Clubs," yet to be decided. Readers might find it fascinating to learn that there was a Pelican cricket team before the New Orleans Pelicans baseball team was founded in 1865 and long before the late Tom Benson officially changed the name of his professional basketball team, the NBA New Orleans Hornets, to the Pelicans for the 2013-2014 season.

The *Picayune*, dated September 20, 1859, reported on the previous day's meeting of "the members of the Louisiana, and the Empire Base Ball Clubs, on the Delachaise ground." There was a considerable turnout but the weather was "looking so inauspicious" that the umpire, "by consent of the captains ... declared that ... the game commenced last Wednesday should be resumed on Thursday afternoon, at half past three o'clock." The two teams "thought they might as well have a little sport for their trouble, and two sides were made up, who played an hour or two, during which, notwithstanding the bad state of the

ground, some very good play was made. A smart shower coming up, just after five o'clock, put a sudden end to the afternoon amusement."

Not only was baseball and cricket popular on the field in 1859, but also in print. A trip to Thomas L. White's, Bookseller & Stationer, at 105 Canal Street in New Orleans, would provide the reader with an assortment of at least three books or "pocket companions" dedicated to the popular sports. Shown below is an advertisement featured in the New Orleans *Daily True Delta*, published November 29, 1859.

BASE BALL
AND
CRICKET BOOKS!
FOR SALE AT
THOMAS L. WHITE'S,
Bookseller & Stationer!
105 CANAL STREET.

BASE-BALL PLAYER'S POCKET COMPANION.
CRICKET FIELD, or the History and the Science of
Cricket.
THE CRICKET PLAYER'S POCKET COMPANION.
No 17 1/2 24p

As America's population grew, so did the popularity of what the *Picayune* called in November of 1860 "the National Game." Baseball quickly eclipsed cricket as the city's most popular team sport. In 1887, the Pelicans became a league franchise for the city in the newly formed Southern League, continuing the city's lasting love affair with baseball. The city's minor league *Zephyrs*, are today called the *Baby Cakes*. Boudreaux the Nutria has survived as mascot, but he got a weight reduction makeover.

On March 29, 2018, the city lost one of its favorite sons, Daniel Joseph "Rusty" Staub (born April 1, 1944). This New Orleans-born Jesuit Blue Jay was the only major league player to have 500 hits with four different ball teams. Ty Cobb, Alex Rodriguez and Rusty are the only major league players to have hit home runs before turning 20 years old, and after turning 40 Staub, also nicknamed "Le Grand Orange" for his red hair, was on the Hall of Fame ballot for seven years from 1991 to 1997, but was never chosen. He was, however, inducted into the New York Mets Hall of Fame, the Texas Sports Hall of Fame and the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame. He was truly a baseball legend.



Only appropriate that "Le Grand Orange" promoted Orange Crush in French, while a member of the Montreal Expos

Another famous New Orleanian known to feel at home in an "orange" color scheme was Rock and Roll Hall of Fame composer, musician and producer Allen Toussaint. His fashion sense was impeccable, and back in the day, according to Deacon John Moore, Allen had "a tomato-red Cadillac convertible, double parked outside of the Dew Drop Inn." The Deacon deemed Toussaint "a real sharp dresser, always Mr. GQ," and I would add that his bespoke suits were always the right choice.

But he always did it his way. Perhaps his ensemble would include a mix of a pinstriped suit, paisley patterns, florals or sequins with, of all things, Birkenstock sandals. Sometimes he would wear a sharp Nehru jacket, and other times a conservative black tuxedo.

A close friend of this elegant musical virtuoso confided to me recently that there was a quote by renowned artist Walter Inglis Anderson of Ocean Springs, Mississippi, that she believed summed up Allen Toussaint's great sense of fashion:

"Dress bravely and be sure there is an eye to see it, and the powers that be will see to it that you live up to your clothes."



The great Allen Toussaint, in all his sartorial splendor



NED HÉMARD

New Orleans Nostalgia
"Un Peu de Tout"
Ned Hémard
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