

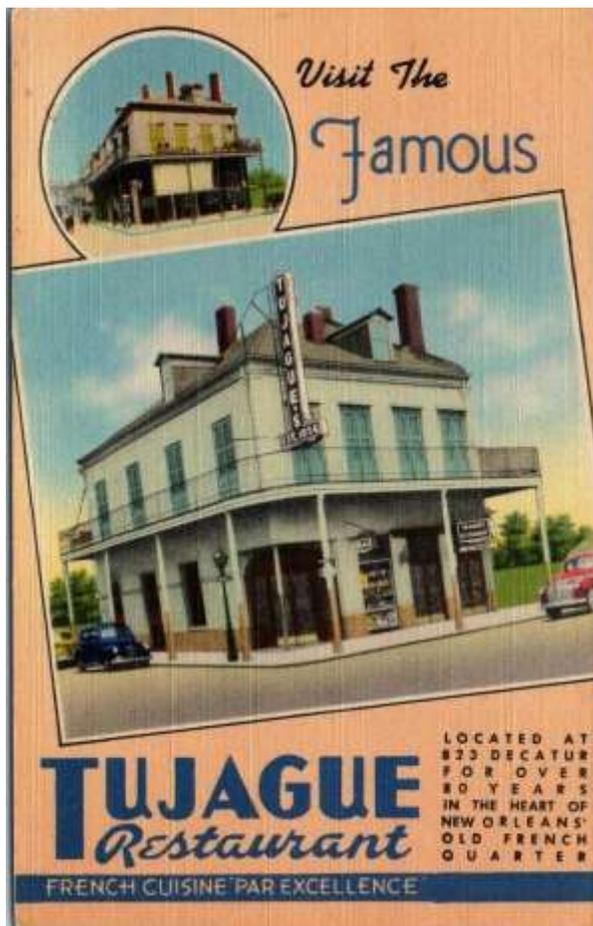
## NEW ORLEANS NOSTALGIA

*Remembering New Orleans History, Culture and Traditions*

*By Ned Hémard*

### **Random Reveries of New Orleans**

Long before the development of Photoshop and other means of image manipulation, there were artists who had no problem creating their own version of reality. Below is a postcard featuring a view of the Crescent City's second oldest restaurant, Tujague's, located on Decatur Street in the French Quarter. But if one looks closely, on either side of the historic dining establishment, there are no adjacent buildings pictured.



*Tujague's in a park-like setting*

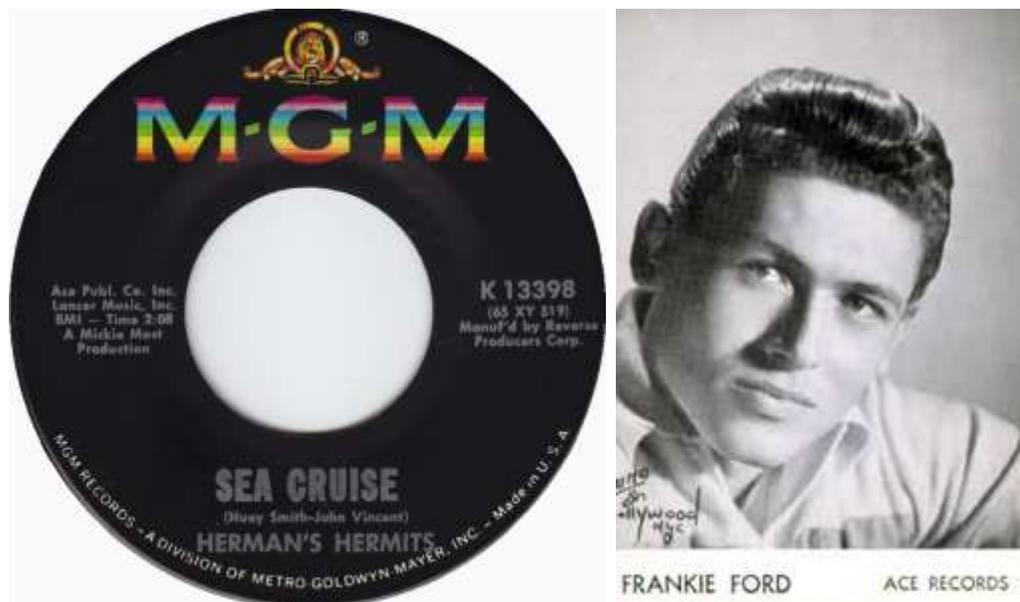
It seems as if Tujague's has been transported by the Abry Brothers to City Park, since (to the right and rear of the building in the postcard view) there appears to be a verdant and perfectly manicured lawn with beautiful trees in the background. The photographic artist operating three-quarters of a century ago decided that the neighboring buildings created perhaps a little too much visual clutter. No problem – just paint in some vegetation.

Speaking of City Park, everyone seems to remember that evening in September, 1964, when the Beatles appeared at City Park Stadium. I myself was there surrounded by ecstatic young women, screaming their heads off for the "Fab Four." Still, I was loving the music.

But how many people remember the appearance in concert two years later of two other British groups: the Dave Clark Five on July 13th, 1966, and Herman's Hermits on July 24th. The stadium had just been renamed Tad Gormley Stadium for the Park's longtime Athletic Director, who died the previous December.

Adam West (who played Batman on TV) also performed at the stadium that year on November 26th. Zap! Pow! Whamm!

Herman's Hermits, by the way, covered some familiar New Orleans hits, such as "Mother-in-Law" by Ernie K-Doe and "Sea Cruise" by the late Frankie Ford.



Frankie, who died recently on September 28, 2015, was born in Gretna, Louisiana, August 4, 1939. He was the adopted son of Vincent and Anna Guzzo, who named him Vincent Francis Guzzo, Jr. Ace Records thought "Frankie Ford" would be a better stage name.

Frankie learned to sing and dance at an early age, and became a singer and pianist in high school for a band known as the Syncopators. Ace Records dubbed Frankie's voice over "Sea Cruise," a song originally recorded by Huey "Piano" Smith and his Clowns. And who can forget the bells and ship foghorns in the background? Once it caught fire nationally, it climbed all the way to number 14 on *Billboard's* Hot 100 in April of 1959, remaining on the charts for seventeen weeks. The record was a million-seller, as well as a rock and roll classic. Ooh wee, ooh wee baby!

Frankie was also immortalized as one of the "3 Ghouls" who recorded the novelty record entitled "Morgus the Magnificent." The other two musicians were Mac Rebennack (Dr. John) and Jerry Byrne of "Lights Out" fame. Everyone in New Orleans loved the song, but it did not sell well outside the Crescent City.

In Hellenistic Greek and Roman architecture, a columned porch or open colonnade in a building surrounding a court with an interior garden is called a peristyle. Something somewhat like that was built in City Park in 1907.



*The Peristyle, City Park, New Orleans, old postcard view*

Built as an elevated area for dancing, the Peristyle was originally called the *Paristyleum* – a name no New Orleans native would have mastered easily.

Five years later, another park structure would prove equally difficult to pronounce. The Casino, a fine example of Spanish Mission Revival architecture, was constructed in 1912. Its purpose was as an administrative center for the Park, as well as a refreshment stand or

place where food and drinks were sold – hence the name “cantina.” A local story explains how a unique local accent transformed the word “can-ti-na” into “ca-sin-a,” until it finally ended up as “casino”.

In 2012, local *café au lait* lovers were delighted to learn that Morning Call had opened for business on the ground floor of the Casino, adjacent to the gift shop and public restrooms. Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, hot beignets dusted with powdered sugar and delicious coffee are always there when needed. The setting turned out to be ideal for both the Casino and Morning Call.

Besides the City’s love of great coffee with chicory, there is another love affair of huge proportions: the City’s love for the New Orleans Saints – which brings us to a strange discovery. What does the nineteenth President of the United States (shown below) have to do with our NFL team?



*Rutherford B. Hayes*

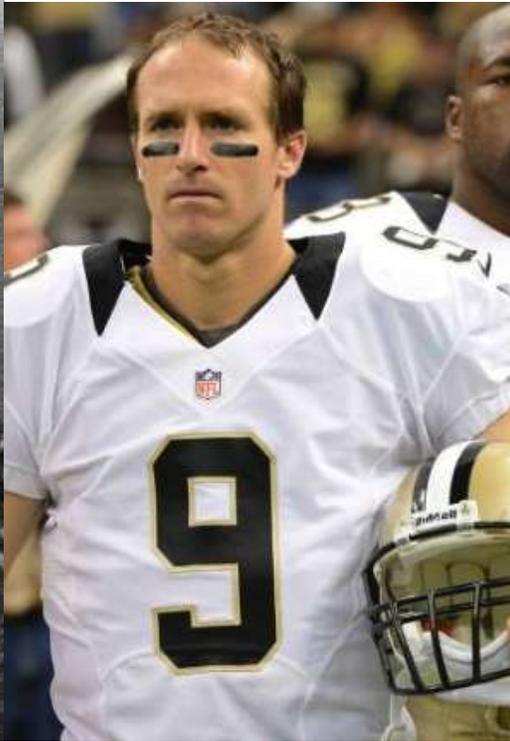
First of all, he might not have been elected President at all. His Democratic opponent, Samuel Tilden won the popular vote by over a quarter of a million votes. The Electoral Commission awarded Louisiana to Hayes (which Tilden unofficially carried by 6,300 votes). A few southern states like Louisiana were making a deal to have Reconstruction end in exchange for Hayes being given the necessary electoral votes. There was a threat of leading the nation into chaos by leaving it with no President on March 4th. The desired concessions were the removal of the handful of troops that protected the remaining Republican state governments in New Orleans, Louisiana, and Columbia, South Carolina; a federal subsidy for the Texas & Pacific Railroad; and cabinet appointments for some prewar Whigs.

It came close to the wire, but with 185 votes to Tilden's 184, Hayes squeaked by as the winner just two days before his inauguration.

But in his early days, before he was whiskered, Rutherford B. Hayes bore a striking resemblance to the Saints' record-breaking quarterback, Drew Brees.



*Rutherford*



*Drew*

Here's another set of photographs comparing the two:



Earlier this month, on October 4, 2015, Drew Brees' 80-yard touchdown pass to C. J. Spiller only thirteen seconds into overtime gave the Saints a 26-20 victory over the Dallas Cowboys and gave Drew 400 touchdown passes for his career, making him only the 5th player in NFL history to reach that milestone. The person in first place also has New Orleans roots, Peyton Manning, with 536 and still going. Drew, however, is the fastest player ever to reach 400 TD mark, in 205 games.

Wonder if Drew's *doppelgänger* could throw an 80-yard pass.

## **NED HÉMARD**

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