

## NEW ORLEANS NOSTALGIA

*Remembering New Orleans History, Culture and Traditions*

*By Ned Hémard*

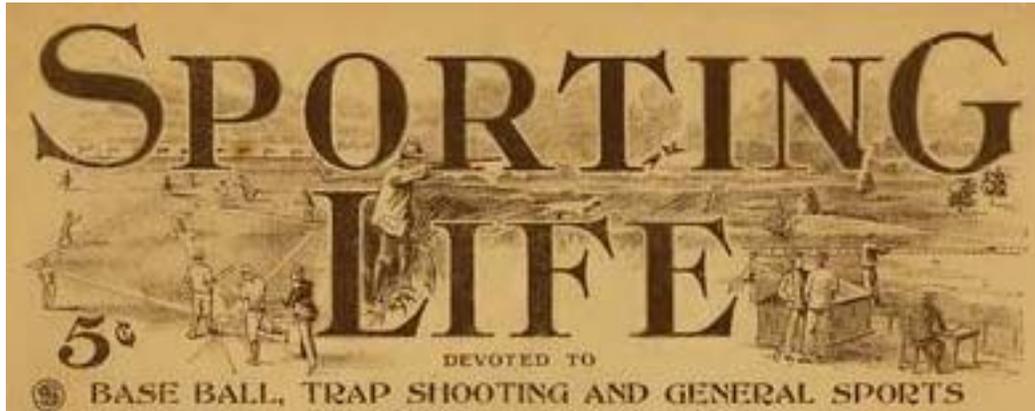
### ***A Sporting Life***

Founded in Philadelphia in 1883 by Francis Richter, August Rudolph and Thomas S. Dando, *Sporting Life* was a popular American weekly newspaper, which (according to its motto featured prominently on the paper's masthead) was "Devoted To Base Ball, Trap Shooting and General Sports". Published from 1883 to 1917 (with Francis Richter as publisher) and from 1922 to 1924, *Sporting Life* provided national coverage on two sports primarily: baseball and trapshooting.



*Francis Richter, Sporting Life Publisher*

By 1886 the publication had 40,000 subscribers, and (by 1890) “the largest circulation of any sporting or baseball newspaper” in the U.S. *Sporting Life* is also famous for having published several early series of baseball cards, their pre-World War I cards being among the scarcest and most popular in the area of baseball card collecting.



*Sporting Life Masthead*

Baseball was popular in New Orleans in 1905. Opening Day for the New Orleans Pelicans was August 7 in Meridian, Mississippi, against the Little Rock Travelers. The Pelicans won the Southern Association Pennant in 1905 despite being quarantined due to an outbreak of yellow fever, forcing the Pelicans to play the remainder of their games on the road. Manager Charles Frank saw his team win 84 games, while losing 45 (.651). Home games were played at Athletic Park – just across from present-day Jesuit High School. Pelican Stadium (called Heinemann Park from 1915 through 1938) had not yet been established. January 24, 2013, Tom Benson’s New Orleans Hornets officially confirmed a name change to the New Orleans Pelicans. The Pelicans now play basketball.

Trapshooting acquired its name due to the curious fact that live birds were released from a trap in the sport’s original incarnation. Taken up since the late 18th century, trapshooting was developed at first as a method of practice for bird hunters. Real birds were initially used, usually Passenger Pigeons (now extinct), and released as animate targets. Other live moving targets included blackbirds, purple martins and even bats, and the first records of this type of shooting can be found in the 1831 records of the Sportsman Club of Cincinnati. Artificial birds (in the form of glass balls) were introduced around the time of the American Civil War.

Captain Adam H. Bogardus invented the first practical glass ball trap (or launcher) in 1877, made from a wagon spring. This trap threw the

ball airborne at least sixty feet in a very long arc. The same year, he patented various designs of glass target balls (an improvement over the heavier European variety). The most popular color was amber, with varying shades of blue being the second most popular. The early designs for the Bogardus balls included a diamond pattern, raised from the surface of the ball in order to prevent pellets from glancing or ricocheting off the edge of the surface. Also, any shot hitting one of these ridges would usually shatter the ball. Some of the glass spheres were filled with feathers or powder, giving the illusion of a bird being hit. A glass ball trap belonging to the Tally-Ho Club for many years survived Hurricane Katrina and is on display at the club, along with a variety of glass ball targets. Eventually clay pigeons were introduced in the 1880s and replaced glass balls as the projectiles of choice.

In trapshooting today, the clay targets are launched from a single "house" or device, usually away from the shooter. Skeet shooting differs in that targets are launched from two "houses" in paths that intersect in front of the shooter. A contest was held to name this new sport in 1926, and Gertrude Hurlbutt came up with the name skeet, derived from the Scandinavian word for "shoot". The sport of sporting clays (different from trap and skeet) involves a more complex course with multiple launch points laid out over natural terrain. For this reason, it is often described as "golf with a shotgun".

With *Sporting Life's* other area of focus (besides baseball) being trapshooting, it was appropriate that the publication covered a 1905 trapshooting competition between the Lake Catherine Club and the Tally-Ho Club. 1905 was also the year that electricity was first introduced at the Tally-Ho Club (founded 1815), where an electric generator was installed at a cost of \$575.

*The Picayune's Guide to New Orleans* of 1904 described the Lake Catherine area: "Of all the sporting points along the Gulf coast, Lake Catherine seems the best situated and best equipped." The report continues, "There are two public camps at Lake Catherine. Jacquet, a veteran sportsman, operates a sportsman's hotel, and he has become famous all along the line of clubhouses for his cooking. At this camp a hunter can hire everything needed, excepting the gun."

The following is from an article entitled "TRAP AT NEW ORLEANS" featured in *Sporting Life*, dated March 25, 1905:

"New Orleans, La., March 17. In a team match for a dinner, between the Lake Catharine Gun Club and the Tally-Ho Gun and Rod Club, the former won, by the score of 439 to 379."

The article continued, "R. E. Saucier" of the Lake Catherine Club "made high score with 94", while Tally-Ho member "Chaudet scored

next best with 93."

The overall scores follow below:

"LAKE CATHERINE CLUB.

R. E. Saucier .....	24 25 23 22 - 94
Miste .....	18 22 22 24 - 86
John Nolan .....	21 20 23 19 - 83
Chas. McEmery .....	20 20 24 24 - 88
Stan Plassan .....	21 22 22 23 - <u>88</u>
	439

TALLY-HO CLUB.

Maurice Kaufman .....	21 20 16 20 - 77
Chaudet .....	23 24 21 25 - 93
Lee Sinnot .....	20 20 18 17 - 75
Gus Cantrelle .....	16 18 18 17 - 69
Wm. Trinchard .....	19 16 14 16 - <u>65</u>
	379

The Lake Catherine team used 'pump' guns and Leader shells."



*Shooting trap at the Tally-Ho Club over a century ago*

Another article in *Sporting Life*, appeared on April 17, 1909:

"The Tally-Ho Gun Club, of New Orleans, has issued programs for its three-day shoot to be held April 19, 20 and 21. W. F. Trinchard, the manager of the shoot, will be glad to send a program to any shooter sending his name to Box 488, New Orleans. The program is extremely interesting and contains 64 pages."

In addition to the Tally-Ho Club, the article continued, "The Orleans Gun and Rod Club, of North Shore, La., will hold its inaugural tournament on June 13, 14 and 15. George H. Kostmayer, secretary-treasurer, Room 9, Masonic Temple, New Orleans, La., has the affair in charge."

Maurice Kaufman, who shot 77 in the 1905 match, was Captain of the Tally-Ho Club in 1905. Gustave (Gus) Cantrelle, who scored 69, served as Club Lieutenant in 1906. George H. Brockman was Secretary-Treasurer. William F. Trinchard, born in New Orleans, 1859, served as Captain of the Tally-Ho Club 1906-1908 and was a member of its Board of Directors when first incorporated in 1906. Captain Trinchard, though coming up short in 1905, won a Dupont shooting competition on September 6, 1908. His winning plaque has survived numerous storms and is in the possession of the Tally-Ho Club.

Captain A. H. Bogardus and his four sons were renowned marksmen that toured with Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show. Tragedy struck in October 1884 when the Wild West Show, bound for New Orleans and its World's Fair, collided with another steamer near Rodney, Mississippi. Captain Bogardus lost all of his guns and shooting paraphernalia, which losses totaled \$40,000, when Buffalo Bill's ship caught fire, burned and sank. The Captain was unable to afford replacing his guns and equipment. He then left Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show with his sons and went to work for the Adam Forepaugh Circus in 1887 and then on to Sells Bros. Circus from 1888 to 1891. Late 1884 was the year Bill Cody hired Annie Oakley and Frank Butler to replace Captain Bogardus. After 1891, Captain Bogardus ended up as proprietor of his own shooting galleries in Illinois and Arkansas.

Theodore Roosevelt was President in 1905 and visited New Orleans on October 27 of that year. Before becoming President, TR observed something that few noticed - while in the West, he discovered that the truly dedicated marksmen were not military, but civilians. While recruiting his Rough Riders, Roosevelt chose westerners who could already shoot. Knowing it took time and practice to produce fine marksmen, Congress passed a bill in 1903 (with Teddy's support from the "bully" pulpit) that is the foundation of the National Matches and the National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice.

As for the outbreak of yellow fever in the Crescent City in 1905, it was the final yellow fever epidemic in the United States. Though the knowledge that mosquitoes transmitted the disease had been determined in 1900, five years later the city was still unprepared for its arrival. In New Orleans, they employed methods recently proven successful in Havana. The city was fumigated, cisterns were screened and mosquitoes' breeding grounds were destroyed. Shocking to discover, after Archbishop Chapelle died from the dread disease, holy water in St. Louis Cathedral was found to contain mosquito larvae.

The priests emptied and cleaned out the fonts, but the epidemic continued. October marked its end, with 452 deaths recorded in New Orleans.

One can only imagine what the mosquitoes were like out on the marsh during the trapshooting match that March in 1905.

## **NED HÉMARD**

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