

VIEWING THE CHAMPS-ÉLYSÉES AS A TRANSITIONAL SPACE

by

STACIL SWINEY

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Abstract

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Staci L Swiney, MA

The University of Texas at Arlington, 2013

Supervising Professor: Steven Reinhardt

Today the Champs-Élysées serves as one of the most iconic boulevards in the world; however, in the eighteenth century the area functioned similar to a modern day park. The transitional space provided fresh air and entertainment to the citizens of Paris.

Contemporary documents illustrate both the many uses of the Champs-Élysées and the Comte d'Angiviller's determination to conserve the area as a transitional space. Although ultimately Angiviller failed to preserve the Champs-Élysées, he deserves recognition, as his efforts predate the park movement by nearly sixty years.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

The Champs-Élysées brings to mind images of the Arc de Triomphe, grand hotels, and cafes. The avenue is now known for its variety of both popular and prestigious shopping, including the largest Addidas store in the world. The name Champs-Élysées is French for Elysian Fields, a reference to the final destination of a blessed soul in the afterlife of pagan mythology. The boulevard is located in the eighth *arrondissement* of Paris. The avenue measures nearly a mile and a half in length, and serves as a tourist favorite and houses some of the most expensive real estate in the world. Besides the Eiffel Tower, the entrance into the avenue stands as one of the most iconic images of modern Paris.

Today, the promenade extends from the Arc de Triomphe to the Place de la Concorde. The Jardins des Champs-Élysées line the boulevard, and on the southern side of the gardens are the Grand and Petit Palais. The Elysée Palace is positioned along the northern part of the avenue and serves as the official home to the French President. Every year the avenue hosts one of the largest military parades in Europe. Prior to its current status as a famous boulevard, the Champs-Élysées had an equally illustrious past. The promenade had always been more than a simple street, even when it was located on the outskirts of the city.

The Champs-Élysées during the eighteenth century consisted of a vast expanse of land, home to both vegetable gardens and planted rows of trees and other greenery. There were a few establishments in the space such as cafes, and a few members of the

nobility owned homes along the border of the promenade. For the most part, however, it remained very rural. In 1777, the



Figure 1: *Plans anciens de Paris*. Jaillot, 1775

Director of Buildings of the King, Comte d'Angiviller, assigned a small contingent of Swiss guards to the promenade in order to help maintain order. He placed the Swiss soldier Ferdinand Federici in control of the three-man force. The *Archives Nationales* contains 417 documents pertaining to Federici and his tenure as commander of the patrol for the Champs-Élysées. While the Federici documents include a wide array of information, they are particularly relevant to this study for two reasons. First, the documents further aid in illustrating the popularity of the area along with its many uses. Secondly, the complications encountered by the guard are especially useful in defining



the promenade as a transitional space. The documents include daily reports written by the guard captain, as well as a series of letters between various Parisian officials. In 2008, Arlette Farge published a compilation of the documents entitled *Flagrants délits sur les Champs-Élysées (1777-1791): Les Dossiers de Police du Gardien Federici*. The collection has yet to be translated into English, but Farge states that she did some syntactic reorganization in order to make the reading easier. The majority of the thesis will focus on these documents.<sup>1</sup>

In order to prove that the Champs-Élysées fit the description of a park, it is essential to establish the creation, location, and uses of the walkway. Writing the history of the Champs-Élysées is a complicated endeavor. For the most part, the walkway has been largely ignored by historians. The story of the Champs-Élysées seems to exist only in the by-notes of history. Its creation, transition and significance rarely receive the attention that those topics deserve. This has resulted in the modern perception of the Champs-Élysées merely as another Parisian boulevard, further complicating any detailed academic study. The Champs-Élysées generally is associated with modern events such as the Axis and later Allied victory parades of the Second World War, which were held on the Champs-Élysées Boulevard due to its historic and symbolic significance. Its early history remains obscure. Therefore, in order to paint a more complete picture, it is necessary to combine and examine the many scattered individual references to the walkway. Larger histories of Paris provide limited information pertaining to the promenade, yet no significant publication exists

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<sup>1</sup> In order to avoid any confusion, the citations will be as follows: report with the date (Report April 1, 1787) or letter with the sender and recipient (Letter Angiviller to Federici April 1787).

specifically about this area which became in the course of the century a kind of transitional space. This scattered information will be pooled to help depict the status of the promenade in the eighteenth century. From its inception, the Champs-Élysées has borne witness to the dramatic history of one of the most famous cities in the world. In addition to the Federici documents, this work will utilize contemporary quotes and stories pertaining to the walkway in an attempt to clarify its definition and importance.

Furthermore, this work will examine the question of Angiviller's relative success in fulfilling the vision he articulated for the promenade. Angiviller routinely expressed a great deal of passion concerning the management of this transitional space or park. From his correspondence, I will paint a picture of his dream for the Champs-Élysées and illustrate his own feelings regarding his work there. Did he feel his efforts in creating and maintaining the walkway as a park were fruitful or in vain?

In order to determine whether or not the Champs-Élysées served as a park, it is essential to understand the characteristics of a park. In 1830, cities around the world began using public spaces to establish what were called "parks." Although the park movement did not start until the nineteenth century, the concept had been in existence for some time; it simply lacked a coherent definition. The park movement provided a unified set of guidelines or characteristics that combined to officially define a park. Typically, parks existed on the fringes of a city, or in close proximity to one; thus they constitute a "transitional space" that lies between an urban and a rural setting and typically combines elements of both. For that reason, this study will use the terms *park* and *transitional space* interchangeably. More often than not, these transitional spaces

initially lay outside the jurisdiction of the city they bordered. As will be shown, this caused problems in the management of the spaces. Throughout history, one often finds that these spaces eventually fall prey to the urbanization of their metropolis, placing stress on such recreational land use.<sup>2</sup>

Growing urbanization created a physical and emotional need for an escape from the rigors, complexities, and pollution of urban life. The growth of cities meant the loss of personal space. Streets replaced residential yards, buildings replaced open fields. Moreover, an increase in urban population created sanitation issues in the accumulation of both human and industrial waste. In order to receive much needed fresh air and exercise, people required a nearby area reserved for such activity. During the park movement, city officials believed healthier and happier people created better citizens. Parks served as the perfect way for people to commune with nature and enjoy the entertainment and relaxation offered there. Because city officials believed that the parks themselves may have lacked the ability to lure the local populace, especially persons in lower social classes, the officials provided beautiful gardens, music, festivals, refreshments and various other entertainments.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, the open spaces allowed people to participate in physical games. In France, the most popular games were tennis and *barres*.<sup>4</sup> Many parks set aside an area

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<sup>2</sup> Harriet Jordan, "Public Parks: 1885-1914," *Garden History* 22, no 1 (Summer, 1994), 85 No. 4 (December, 1957), 259

<sup>3</sup> Jordon, 86

<sup>4</sup> *Barres* refers to a game played outdoors between two teams. The game was played in a rectangle and required a large amount of space.

for sports and rented gaming equipment to players and chairs for those spectating.<sup>5</sup> Generally, there were two layouts for parks. The first catered heavily to games and possessed very little design. The second consisted of mainly gardens with little room for games.<sup>6</sup> Some parks did combine the two concepts. I will argue that the Champs-Élysées was both game-oriented and a garden; it thus sought to serve a broad spectrum of society.

Several people play key roles in relation to the primary sources, and while they will be further examined in later chapters, it is crucial to introduce and identify them in order to avoid any possible confusion. The prominent figures include: Comte d'Angiviller, Comte d'Affry, Ferdinand Federici, and Jean-Charles Lenoir. Several other individuals will be mentioned, but as they are not recurring characters, their significance does not warrant an introduction.

Charles-Claude Flahaut de la Billaderie, Comte d'Angiviller, became the Director of Buildings of the King in 1775. He also served as Director-General of the *Académie de Peinture et de Sculpture*. He began a project designed to promote French art through commissioning paintings and sculptures depicting great men from modern French history.<sup>7</sup> Simultaneously, he sought to consolidate the Champs-Élysées as a transitional space that served as a shining example of natural French beauty. He was also prominent in the development of the Louvre. He became a target of the Revolution and was forced to seek refuge in Germany, where he died in 1810.

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<sup>5</sup> Jordan, 86

<sup>6</sup> Jordan, 90

<sup>7</sup> Francis H. Dowley, "D'Angiviller's Grand Hommes and the Significant Moment," *The Art Bulletin* 39 No (December, 1957), 259

Louis-Auguste Affry, lord of Saint-Barthélemy and Brétigny, was born at Versailles but was of Swiss descent. After gaining recognition on the battlefield, he quickly rose through the ranks. In 1767, Affry was placed in control of all the Swiss regiments serving France. The king employed numerous Swiss regiments throughout France, including Versailles and other establishments owned by the king. In addition to being the colonel of the Swiss Guard, Affry served as military governor of Paris in 1791, until the Revolution forced him to choose between the two positions. He consequently chose to remain in control of the Swiss Guard and resigned as military governor. Affry was also a patron of the arts and maintained friendships with prestigious people such as Voltaire. Despite his continued support of the king, Affry did not fall victim to the Revolution. Although placed on trial, he was acquitted and allowed to retire to his castle in Switzerland.

Ferdinand Federici, a Swiss soldier, was specifically selected by Affry to command the Swiss guard of the Champs-Élysées. He was forty-five years old when he left his Swiss regiment for this special assignment. Federici was married, but it is unclear whether he had any children. Both Federici and his wife lived in the park throughout his tenure. Little is known of Federici outside of the information within these documents. According to Affry and Angiviller, he was a loyal, honest, and hardworking man. He devoted himself to the maintenance of the walkway, never deserting his post, but was discharged from service shortly after the departure of Angiviller and Affry. Over the years, Federici sought the cross of Saint Louis in hopes

of retiring to the Invalides. Angiviller and Affry wrote glowing recommendations, but he was ultimately denied. After his dismissal, his fate is unknown.

Jean-Charles Pierre Lenoir accepted the position of Lieutenant General of Police in Paris in June of 1776. Lenoir was known for his focus on food safety and other public interest projects. For example, he called for the elimination of copper and lead in the transporting and packaging of food. He made great strides in the modernization of Paris, including developments in firefighting and maintaining continuous street lighting. In addition, he served as head of the library of Paris, which controlled the written materials allowed in the city. He decided which books or pamphlets were detrimental to the people and attempted to regulate their flow into Paris. In fact, Lenoir was responsible for regulating the very mood of the people in the city. He kept an eye on any suspicious people and foreigners in the capital to ensure they were not inciting the public. Lenoir is often credited with being a vital figure in the development of a modern police force, and both Angiviller and Federici often turned to him for assistance with policing the promenade. During the early years of the Revolution, he became the target of heavy criticism and retired to Switzerland. He returned to Paris in 1802 and he planned to write a fourteen-volume memoir in order to clear his name and outline the ways in which he had attempted to reform France. Only five of the volumes were completed, but all of the notes and manuscripts are kept in a branch of the National Archives in Orleans.

Angiviller's vision of the promenade predates the park movement, but his efforts anticipate the goals of city officials at that later time. During a time of expansion and



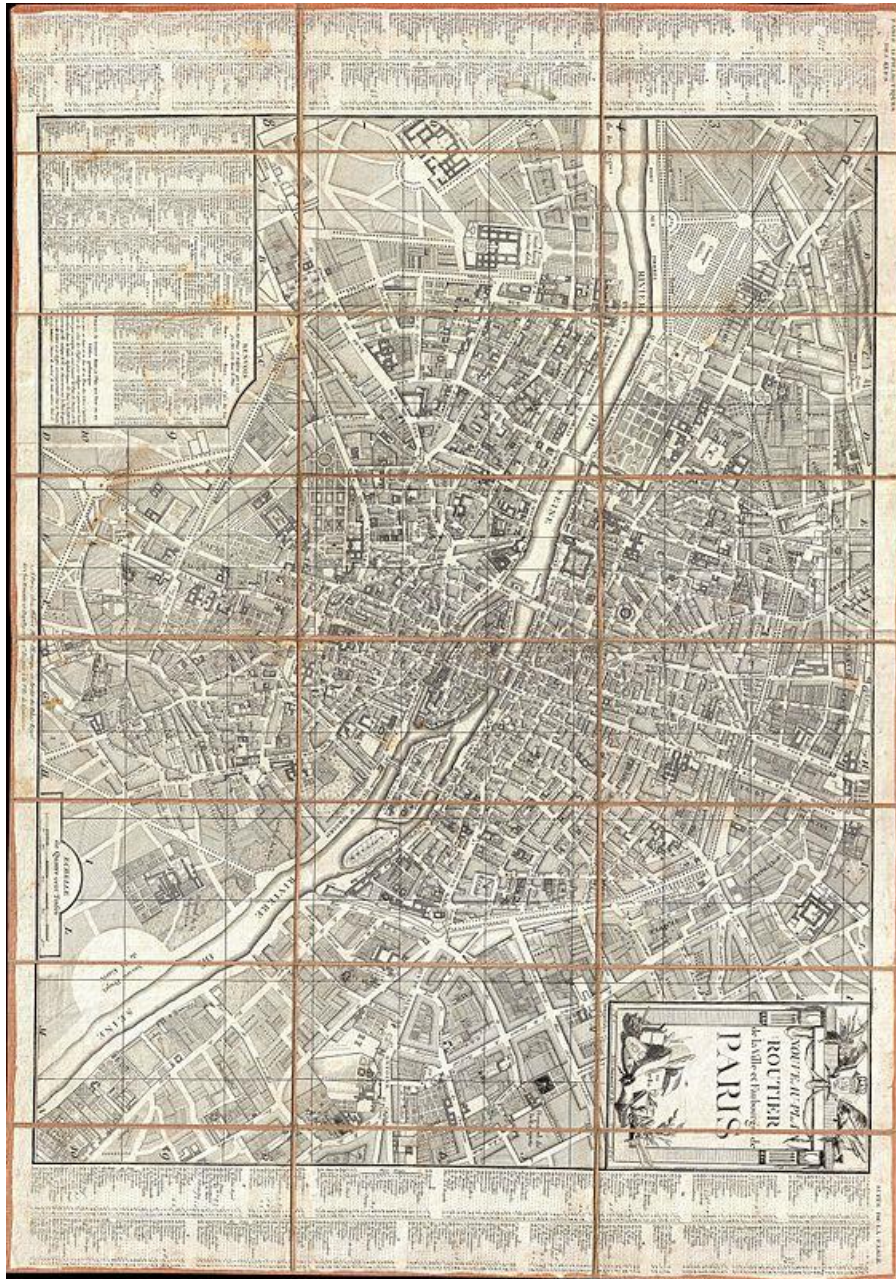


Figure 3: *Nouveau Plan Routier de la Ville et Faubourgs de Paris. 1780*



## Chapter 2

### The Champs-Élysées: Creation, Location, Uses

In order to comprehend the intricacies of the Champs-Élysées and its fascinating role in the history of Paris, it is vital to look at the area's creation, location, and uses. Without fully understanding the complexities of the space, it remains impossible to give the Champs-Élysées a true and accurate definition. Exploring the history of the Champs-Élysées is a fairly complicated endeavor, as the boulevard stems from urbanization projects initiated by several royal household members during the early seventeenth century. Prior to these urbanization efforts, Paris essentially existed in three distinct and different parts: la Ville (located on the right bank of the Seine), la Cité (located on the island) and la rive gauche of the Seine.<sup>8</sup> Due to an inadequate number of bridges (only five in 1572) travel through Paris remained difficult, leading to an unbalanced population and economic density. Nearly all governmental and business operations took place in the much larger right bank, causing most of the wealth to also be centered in northern Paris. The deplorable conditions of the shorelines of the Seine, combined with the small number of bridges across the river, kept the wealthy from building there. Royal officeholders and court members lived on a strip of land referred to as the Royal Axis that ran parallel to the Seine. At this time, the Champs-Élysées, also located on the right bank, consisted of fields and market gardens.

Maria de Medici's architectural projects were closely connected to the creation of six new bridges sponsored by various members of the royal household. In addition,

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<sup>8</sup> Sara Galletti, "Female Agency and Early Modern Urbanism: The Paris of Maria de' Medici," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 71, No. 2 (June 2012): 188

Maria Medici's three major contributions to Paris were the Aqueduct of Arcueil, the Cours-la-Reine, and the Luxembourg Palace and gardens. The Cours-La-Reine was the first step in the creation of the Champs-Élysées. The Cours-La-Reine consisted of four rows of planted trees which created three gated roadways. The promenade followed the bank of the Seine, but the road leading to Versailles separated the promenade from the river. In 1616 when work on the promenade began, one was considered outside the city limits once one crossed the bridge across the moat of the Tuileries; therefore, the Cours-La-Reine and the Champs-Élysées were originally outside city limits. The king annexed the village of Roule in 1722. On the right side of the Cours-La-Reine was a large marshy plain that extended to the village of Roule. In 1667, French architect Le Nôtre planted the plain with elms, creating several walkways that ended in the shape of a star. From that elevated vantage point, parts of the city and the surrounding countryside could be seen.<sup>9</sup> One of the avenues was more spacious than the others and stretched from the esplanade that would become the Place Louis XV to the Étoile.<sup>10</sup> Originally designated le Grand Cours, the promenade received its modern name of Champs-Élysées in 1709.<sup>11</sup>

The urbanization of those portions of land proved vital not only to the physical creation of the area that became the Champs-Élysées, but also to its becoming a popular attraction. The additional bridges helped to unite the distinct sectors of the city by

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<sup>9</sup> Eric Hanson, *The Invention of Paris: A History in Footsteps*, Trans. David Fernbach ( London: Verso, 2010), 118

<sup>10</sup> Hanson, 117

<sup>11</sup> A. and W. Galignani, *History of Paris, From the Earliest Period to the Present Day, VOL III* ( A. and W. Galignani, 1825), 308

establishing a more fluid means of transportation between them. The banks of the Seine became prime real estate as the perceived distance between the banks shrank.

According to Sara Galletti, the importance of Maria de Medici's public works in the urbanization of Paris has not been emphasized because of her gender. This explanation may help illuminate why there is so little literature on the origins of the Champs-Élysées. Although the creation of the Champs-Elysees was part of a larger project, the original intention of the promenade was to connect the Tuileries gardens to a walkway for de Medici's personal use.



Figure 4 : *Les Champs-Élysées* 1717 Jean-Antoine Watteau

In fact, Maria de Medici is credited with bringing promenading via carriage to France from Florence. Her new method of promenading became immensely popular amongst the French noblewomen. The early years of carriage promenading belonged solely to the wealthy nobles. Very few personal carriages existed as the cost remained out of reach for nearly all Parisians. Only in the second half of the eighteenth century did the use of personal carriages spread into new segments of the population.<sup>12</sup> In addition, the promenade remained closed to the public until the eighteenth century. One can assume that the popularity of the Cours-La-Reine led to the desire to expand and create new promenades. French historian Laurent Turcot notes that at its inception, the promenade was intended as an extension of the gardens.<sup>13</sup>

The walkway underwent several changes in a fairly short amount of time. First and foremost, it is important to keep in mind that the Champs-Élysées was owned by the king and remained under the direct supervision of the Director of Buildings of France until the Revolution. In 1753, King Louis XV purchased the mansion and land of Louis Henri de la Tour-d'Auvergne, comte d'Evreux, now known as the Palais de l'Élysée Bourbon, for his mistress Madame de Pompadour. The mansion flanked the Champs-Élysées near the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré. This action created an influx of the elite into the area.<sup>14</sup> The public did not approve of the King's mistress, and a rumor circulated claiming that she disliked the trees, feeling they impeded her view of

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<sup>12</sup> David Garrioch, *The Making Of Revolutionary Paris* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 202), 251

<sup>13</sup> Laurent Turcot, *Le promeneur à Paris au XVIII siècle* ( France: Éditions Gallimard, 2007), 209

<sup>14</sup> Robert Isherwood, *Farce and Fantasy: Popular Entertainment in Eighteenth Century Paris* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 136

the walkway, she allegedly appealed to her brother, the Director of Buildings, Marquis de Marigny, who granted her request and the trees were cut down.<sup>15</sup> Eric Hazan, author of *The Invention of Paris*, describes the event differently. He argues that Marigny uprooted the trees planted in 1670 in order to level the Étoile and raise the lower ground, thus creating a smoother road. In addition, he replanted the trees to maximize their aesthetic appeal. Hazan admits that the rumor might contain elements of truth but states that either way the changes propelled the Champs-Élysées to new levels of popularity.<sup>16</sup>

Between 1760 and 1772, the Tuileries and the Champs-Élysées were joined with the creation of the Place Louis XV. Famous French architect J.A. Gabriel designed the octagonal square that became the eastern border of the promenade.<sup>17</sup> Gabriel was commissioned in 1758 but the plans were not finalized until 1763. The original design called for a parallelogram two hundred and fifty meters long and one hundred seventy-four meters wide. The city was expected to cover the expense of the building, but city officials gained 500,000 livres from the King to help with the cost. The inauguration of the Place Louis XV took place on June 25, 1765. The result was two ornate palaces and a series of gardens belonging to private houses to the north. A fountain sat near the guards' and servicemen's quarters on the southeast. The area was connected to the Tuileries over the surrounding ditches by the Pont-Tournant.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *History of Paris*, 308

<sup>16</sup> Hazan, 118

<sup>17</sup> Robert Laffont, *The Illustrated History of Paris and Parisians* (France: French and European Publications, 1958), 136.

<sup>18</sup> Isherwood, 137

Colin Jones contends that although the intention was to join the Champs-Élysées with the Place Louis XV, the idea did not reach fruition. According to Jones, the royal administration sought ways to urbanize Paris but also needed to stay within an already depleted budget. The lack of funds caused the king to donate the square to the city. The Champs-Élysées was being billed as an urban walkway and thus connecting the square to the promenade would help urbanization efforts. Parisians thought of the Place Louis XV as existing on the outer limits of the city and, to make matters worse, the square was separated from the walkway by a moat.<sup>19</sup> Carriages were able to cross the ditches on arched bridges, but individuals were forced to walk over a series of planks. Needless to say, this presented a precarious endeavor, which served as the catalyst for numerous injuries. According to Robert Isherwood, the area was muddy during the winter and dusty during the summer.<sup>20</sup> During the 1780's the Pont Louis XVI was built; it connected the Faubourg Saint-Honoré with the Faubourg Saint-Germaine. After the addition, the Place Louis XV truly began an urbanization movement for the area. Unfortunately, the Place Louis XV also became a place of bloodshed during the Revolution. A guillotine, placed in the square, took countless lives-- including that of the king.

Another major renovation appears to have taken place in April of 1764. Not only were the trees replaced but several features were added in an attempt to increase the appeal of the space. Theaters were added along the Avenue Marigny. Cafes offered refreshments such as tea, lemonade, beer and wine. A palm reader even set up shop on

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<sup>19</sup> Colin Jones, *Paris, the Biography of a City* (United States of America: Viking Penguin, 2004), 182

<sup>20</sup> Isherwood, 137

the grounds of the promenade. A type of primitive public transportation was created, which allowed people to take a public coach from Place Louis XV to Versailles. One could also pay to take a boat ride from the Pont Royal. Gambling became popular in the space as well, with the creation of a casino and the addition of horse racing.<sup>21</sup> Many of the restaurants offered an outside terrace for dining allowing patrons to enjoy the scenery while partaking of refreshments. Because of these additions, the Champs-Élysées provided an effective escape from an increasingly urbanized Paris.

The location of the Champs-Élysées plays an essential role not only in establishing the area as a transitional space but in understanding how the position of the walkway affected its development. Defining the boundaries is a critical part of clarifying its location and size. This study focuses primarily on the Champs-Élysées from 1777 to 1791, not only because it reached its height of popularity at this time but also because these were the years Federici patrolled the promenade. Unfortunately, a description of the promenade during that exact period does not exist; therefore, details will be taken from publications closest to the dates listed above to give the best overall imagery. In 1825, *The History of Paris* described the boundaries of the Champs-Élysées as follows:

The Champs-Élysées are bounded on the north by the faubourg Saint Honoré; on the south by the Cours la Reine; on the east by the Place Louis XV. and on the west by Chaillot and the Faubourg du Roule. Their length, from the Place Louis XV, to the Étoile at the opposite extremity, is about nine hundred and fifty yards; their breadth at the eastern boundary is three hundred and seventy-three yards, and at the western seven hundred yards. They are divided by the Neuilly road, the axis of which is the same as that of the grand walk of the garden of the

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<sup>21</sup> Isherwood, 137

Tuileries. This road, planted with trees, which form double walks on each side, is prolonged in a straight line to the barrier, and from thence to the bridge of Neuilly.<sup>22</sup>

Recent measurements have the promenade at a little over a mile in length (2640 yards). The above account lists the walkway at a mere nine hundred and fifty yards, nearly half the modern measurement. The current eastern and western boundaries remain the same, eliminating the possibility that the walkway increased in size, although the Place Louis XV is now referred to as the Place de la Concorde. Historian Thomas Okey describes the Chaillot as “a little to the west of the Rond Point, an old feudal property which Louis XI gave to Phillip de Comines in 1450, and which in 1651 sheltered the unhappy widow of Charles I.”<sup>23</sup>

Prior to 1954 the average yard lacked a concise universal measurement; however, as early as 1824 Britain recognized the average mile as consisting of 1760 yards. Although the measurement of a yard could vary in France, a variance of nearly 1690 yards seems highly improbable. Due to the great difference in numbers, the measurements given by the 1825 publication must be discarded; nonetheless his description of the boundaries prove most useful in providing accurate parameters of the eighteenth century Champs-Élysées.

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<sup>22</sup> *History of Paris*, 309

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Okey, *The Story of Paris* (New York : E.P. Dutton & Co., 1925), 442





Figure 5: Charles Léopold Grevenbroeck *Vue cavaliere, pries au-dessus des Champs-Élysees* 1741

Throughout the eighteenth century, the Champs-Élysées served numerous purposes that went beyond Maria de Medici's original vision for the space, and that focused on leisure activities. Although the nobility was accustomed to free time, the concept proved fairly new to the other social classes of Paris. The latter half of the eighteenth century saw a dramatic increase in the number of people seeking leisure activities. Previously, those outside of the nobility lacked the income to engage in entertainment beyond public festivals or performers in the streets of Paris. The growth of the bourgeoisie created an influx of people searching for fashionable recreation. Even a few among the lowest classes of society accrued a large enough income to

pursue leisure.<sup>24</sup> *The History of Paris* (1825) described the area by stating that when entering the Champs-Élysées from the Place Louis XV, the right side was devoted to the promenade whereas the left was utilized for sports such as skittles, bowls and balls. Other popular games played included tennis and *barres*. *Barres* was a team sport specific to France and was played on a rectangular field often containing salient rows. Team size varied but each side possessed an equal number of players. Each team controlled a camp which served as the starting point. The object of the game was to take members of the opposing team prisoner. The game required a great amount of space, which again showcases the magnitude of the Champs-Élysées.

Jacques-Louis Ménétra spoke of playing tennis in the Champs-Élysées. He claims that on one occasion Sieur Masson invited him to participate in a tennis match against the duc d'Orléans and the prince de Condé. He states he was instructed to meet the party at the pont Tournant, which was a bridge across the moats between the Tuileries gardens and the Place Louis XV. In addition, he mentions stopping by the Swiss Guard's booth on his way to the match. According to him, upon his arrival a table filled with extravagant food and a crowd of hundreds awaited them.<sup>25</sup> He also states there were matches both indoors and outdoors, but it remains unclear where the indoor matches were played. He describes the intricacies of the game and the pomp and ceremony surrounding the event but neglects to mention his exact surroundings except to say they were in the Champs-Élysées. Also, Ménétra does not specify dates, so there

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<sup>24</sup> Garrioch, 246

<sup>25</sup> Jacques-Louis Ménétra, *Journal of my Life*, Trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 193-194

is no way to know exactly when these events occurred; however, we know that the journal was written in 1764. Ménétra speaks of the match late in his journal after completing his tour of France; therefore, it seems safe to date the reference closer to 1764. The time constraints make it impossible for the Swiss Guards mentioned to be Federici and his men, but it does set a precedent for the use of Swiss Guards. Lastly, the reference is important because it establishes the Champs-Élysées as a large space used for recreation such as sporting events.

*The History of Paris* states that from 1777 through 1780 the Champs-Élysées was the most popular promenade in Paris. Mercier confirms as much with the following statement:

The magnificent garden of the Tuileries is abandoned today for the avenues of the Champs-Élysées. One admires the fine proportions and design of the Tuileries; but the Champs-Élysées is where all ages and classes of people gather: the pastoral character of the place, the buildings decked out with terraces, the cafés, a wider and less symmetrical ground, all this acts as an invitation.<sup>26</sup>

As Paris's population expanded, creating a more urban area, Parisians sought relief from the pressures of city life. *Philosophes* and writers began casting Paris in a negative light with their less than appealing descriptions. Men such as Mercier, Rousseau, Alfieri, and even Voltaire used words such as “unbearable”, “disgusting” and “barbarous” to define the city once thought to be the jewel of Europe. Mercier stated the constant loud sounds of the city were unbearable. Numerous accounts emphasized

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<sup>26</sup> Louis-Sébastien Mercier Quoted in Eric Hanson, *The Invention of Paris: A history n Footsteps*, Trans. David Fernbach ( London: Verso, 2010), 118

the putrid smells and ugliness of Paris.<sup>27</sup> During this time Paris became enamored with the ideas of the Enlightenment. The trend toward open natural spaces captivated all Parisians, regardless of class.<sup>28</sup> The Champs-Élysées provided a place for Parisians to escape from the overcrowded, noisy city and enjoy nature without having to travel long distances to achieve it.<sup>29</sup> The walkway constituted a transitional space that hovered between urban and rural with its organized and structured nature.

Not only did the most fashionable women of the city use the space to be seen promenading; the Champs-Élysées also boasted an avenue used by grieving wealthy widows to “take air”. Society discouraged widows still in mourning from public appearances. Uncomfortable walking the promenade, the wealthy widows rode in their carriages down the aptly named *Allée des Veuves*. In the latter part of the eighteenth century when carriage promenading became immensely popular, it was by no means limited to wealthy widows. The creation of cheaper carriages in 1750 allowed a larger number of Parisians to purchase them. As a result, this popular pastime was no longer restricted to the nobility. However, the increased number of carriages led to a new problem: traffic congestion. An interesting yet disturbing story recently surfaced pertaining to the marquis de Sade, who found himself caught in a traffic jam on the Place de la Concorde. Wracked with frustration, the impatient marquis used his sword

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<sup>27</sup> Patrice Higonnet, *Paris Capital of the World* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002), 41

<sup>28</sup> Garrioch, 209

<sup>29</sup> Turcot, 212

to stab the horse belonging to another carriage owner.<sup>30</sup> The traffic problem would not be solved until later in the nineteenth century.

Another popular pastime in the eighteenth century that spread across Paris was visiting the dance hall. In 1771 Le Camus de Mézières completed the construction of an establishment for entertainment known as the Coliseum. The idea for the creation of the pleasure house originated with the Crown, and its supervision was entrusted to both the Secretary of the State and the Lieutenant of Police. They were instructed by the king to use the establishment for public celebrations.<sup>31</sup> The structure, massive in size, could hold up to eight thousand people. The circular building was three hundred feet in diameter and sat within an octagon. Situated at the center of the circle was the rotunda designated for dancing. Robert Isherwood describes the ornate structure:

A rotunda, or ballroom 80 feet high with a radius of 60 feet was built at the center of the circle. Surrounded by a concentric circle of galleries and fluted Corinthian columns. These were surmounted by 16 gilded caryatids, which appeared to support the cupola. A lantern 34 feet in diameter in the center of the cupola lighted the rotunda with 81 chandeliers. The galleries were decorated with blue, tucked drapes studded with rosettes. The balconies between the caryatids had green drapes fringed in gold and contained 16 bays with crimson drapes. The coverings that hung from the balconies were supported by 32 iconic columns and 16 pilasters.<sup>32</sup>

In addition to an amphitheater, the rotunda contained a basin filled with roughly six feet of water in which jousting and other forms of amusement took place.<sup>33</sup> Everything about the Coliseum displayed extravagance. Paris had never seen anything so lavish

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<sup>30</sup> Higgonet, 193

<sup>31</sup> Isherwood, 149

<sup>32</sup> Isherwood 151

<sup>33</sup> Robert M. Isherwood, "Entertainment in the Parisian Fairs in the Eighteenth Century," *The Journal of Modern History* 53 No. 1 (Mar., 1981), 35

and grandiose. The cost of the structure was massive, totaling over two and a half million livres. When the Coliseum opened, it still was not completed due to the inability to find sufficient financial investors.<sup>34</sup>

During its operation, the Coliseum was open on Wednesdays and Saturdays, featuring popular entertainments that consisted of dancing, fireworks and concerts.<sup>35</sup> Popular entertainments consisted of dancing, fireworks and concerts. More exotic amusements also took place such as cock fighting, lotteries, and pyrotechnic competitions.<sup>36</sup> From the beginning, the establishment attracted a wide array of people. It was not uncommon for the queen to attend along with numerous other members of the elite; however, the price for admission was low enough to allow the bourgeoisie to enter as well. Members of the elite generally gravitated to the balls and concerts while the middle class tended to favor the jousting. Mercier theorized the downfall of the Coliseum was directly related to its attempt to appeal to both social classes. He argued that it was not lavish enough for *les grands* and failed to provide enough popular pleasures for the bourgeoisie. Rumors circulated that the establishment was little more than a brothel, and the public eventually became disenchanted with most of the entertainments provided.<sup>37</sup> Due to the drop in attendance, it went bankrupt in 1780, and was forced to close.

Festivals and public revelries remained one of the most common uses of the Champs-Élysées. During the early part of the eighteenth century the promenade was

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<sup>34</sup> Isherwood, 150

<sup>35</sup> Isherwood, 149

<sup>36</sup> Isherwood 152

<sup>37</sup> Isherwood, 155

primarily used for holidays and the fair. Every Easter there was a procession to the Abbaye de Longchamp. Every summer the walkway hosted the fair of Benzons. In 1771, the Saint-Ovide fair moved to the Place Louis XV. The fair was an extravagant event that lasted from August 14 until September 15. The origin of the fair dates back to 1662, when Pope Alexander VII gave the remains of Saint Ovide to duc de Créqui. He gave the remains to the Capuchins, a religious order with property that bordered the Place Louis-le-Grand, and every year they hosted a celebration in memory of Saint Ovide. Over the years the festival attracted merchants and various other entertainments. The fair gained popularity after 1765 when members of the nobility began attending. The event also hosted countless merchant stalls and various entertainers. More than one hundred and eighty merchants set up shop during the extravaganza. Each booth measured roughly eleven square feet. Examples of the wares sold included jewelry, clothing, food and household items. Isherwood listed several entertainments “including marionette and optical shows, a billiard parlor, a sea monster, and a Passion play.”<sup>38</sup> The fair drew a large number of people to the promenade yearly, including members of royalty.

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<sup>38</sup> Isherwood, 132



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Figure 6: Jacques François Joseph Swebach, *Fête donnée dans les Champs-Élysées à l'occasion de l'anniversaire de la prise de la Bastille le 14 juillet 1789, 1801*

In September 1791, when Louis XVI accepted the constitution, the king held an extensive festival in both the Tuileries Garden and the promenade. The large outdoor celebration consisted of lighted avenues, and the area housed such amusements as rope-dancers, jugglers, orchestras, dancing, and theater performances.<sup>39</sup> The public returned the favor eight days later by throwing the king a very similar gala. The festivals stopped during the early years of the revolution but were resumed after the signing of the constitution in 1795. The Directory specifically designated the area for any and all

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<sup>39</sup> History of Paris, 310



festivals. Citizens who won prizes in the sporting events hosted at the Champs de Mars were given a celebration in the Champs-Élysées involving musical and theatrical performances. The festivals then concluded with fireworks and dancing.<sup>40</sup>

Upon examining Federici's reports and letters, a picture begins to emerge of the ways the space was used throughout the late eighteenth century and suggests that the area served as much more than a simple promenade. In many respects the walkway varied from the standard Parisian boulevard. For one, it lacked the permanent structures of a large residential or commercial community because the administration allowed very little construction in the space. Secondly, the walkway served more as a garden that remained open to the public.<sup>41</sup> Not all of the promenade's uses were of a recreational nature. The space also served the needs of both military and political causes. As early as 1717 the Czar Peter utilized the space to inspect the royal cavalry, infantry and household troops. The military formed drills and participated in a ceremony for the Czar and the duc d'Orléans. Apparently, the presence of troops in the Champs-Élysées was a fairly common occurrence. In *Le nouveau Paris*, Mercier mentions troops in the area when discussing the dismissal of Necker in the days before the storming of the Bastille:

The army of stockjobbers assembled in the Palais Royal; a man mounted on a table, animated with that boldness, the impulse of the moment, that audacity which effects great things, taking two pistols from his pocket, harangued the people; and exclaiming, "Our ruin is decreed, see what is passing in the Champs-Élysées; the troops are taking possession of the whole space between the Star of Chaillot and the Tuileries, they are drawn up in a line of battle"<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> History of Paris, 311

<sup>41</sup> Turcot, 210

<sup>42</sup> Louis-Sébastien Mercier, *Le nouveau Paris* (1799), 38

In 1901, Walter Rowlands recounted the speech in his book *Among the Great Masters of Oratory: Scenes in the Lives of Famous Orators*, but places the location of the troops in the Champs de Mars as opposed to the Champs-Élysées. Most accounts of the events leading up to the storming of the Bastille do not specify where Louis XVI's troops might have congregated. The location of the promenade in relation to Versailles makes it a likely choice to sequester soldiers, especially considering the space was large enough to house them. Another reason for selecting the promenade may have been its position on the fringes of the city. Perhaps the king thought if the soldiers were positioned in the Champs-Élysées, they would be close enough to the heart of the city to act quickly yet far enough away to allow them to be perceived as less of a threatening force. If that was the original intent, it seems to have backfired as unease quickly spread across the city. During the early nineteenth century, especially after the defeat of Napoleon, the promenade found itself home to military camps again, both Russian and English.

In 1791, a group of Parisians began burning down toll offices in protest of the *octrois* on goods coming into Paris. The assembly finally relented, and in May of 1791 they rescinded the toll taxes. Since a toll gate was placed in the Champs-Élysées, a throng of people celebrated by pushing through the barrier with products such as sheep, cattle, food, and wine.<sup>43</sup> The scene is best captured by the anonymous painter of *The Barrière des Champs-Élysées*. Unfortunately, the celebration was short lived, and the

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<sup>43</sup> Laffont, 150

taxes would soon be reinstated, continuing for nearly a hundred and fifty years. The illustration is significant because it furthers the idea of the Champs-Élysées existing as a space that is simultaneously rural and urban, inside the city yet not truly part of the city. The trees and open space highlight how the promenade mimics a rural space, with the lack of buildings serving as a clear indication the area sits apart from the heart of Paris.



Figure 7: Anonymous, *Barricade at the Champs-Élysées* 1791

The toll gate signifies that the promenade lay within city limits, as the toll gates were placed at the entrances into Paris. In addition, the illustration of the Champs-Élysées barrier points out yet another use for the promenade: the movement of goods and collection of taxes. Not only were goods transported through the Champs-Élysées, but working class Parisians traveled through the promenade in order to visit *guinguettes*. The suburban taverns, located just outside the toll gates, consisted of large rooms for

drinking and dancing. The taverns were simple in nature and generally furnished with wooden benches. The price of wine in Paris continued to reflect the high tax rates. Since these establishments operated outside of city limits, where the cost of wine was much cheaper, working class citizens would join together on the weekends to travel to the taverns.<sup>44</sup> They often passed through the Champs-Élysées, spending part of their day engaged in the leisure activities provided by the walkway.

It is important to note the increase in criminal activity in the Champs-Élysées. As a natural consequence of the increase in both the visitors to and the uses of the promenade, crime increased.<sup>45</sup> On the eve of the Revolution, Paris experienced a surge in criminal activity that swept across the city, creating an atmosphere of nervous anticipation. Natural disasters during the early years of the eighteenth century along with continued warfare were also linked as contributing factors to the rise in criminal activity. Paris experienced a swell in population when crops failed or rural jobs became difficult to come by, and the displaced agricultural workers entered the city in search of employment. A rise in population and the cost of bread are factors commonly attributed to the upswing in criminal activity. The specifics of crime in the Champs-Élysées will be discussed with the examination of Federici's documents; however, an overview of the uses of the promenade must include mention of the illicit activity which led to the assignment of Federici to this area.

As previously stated, the walkway was owned by the king, causing it to remain outside the jurisdiction of the Paris Lieutenant of Police. Once the sun began to set in

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<sup>44</sup> Garrioch, 65

<sup>45</sup> Letter: Angiviller to Lenoir, June 1777

the Champs-Élysées, illegal activities such as dueling flourished. Just as Parisians sought the rural elements of the promenade to escape the rigors of city life, criminals utilized the same features to conduct shady activities away from prying eyes. As a result the rise in unlawful behavior caused the promenade to acquire a bad reputation. Fearing a decline in the popularity of the Champs-Elysees, the royal administration was forced to place Federici and his small band of soldiers in the promenade to police the area. Prior to the addition of Federici, the area was patrolled by the Tuileries guards. The combined areas of the Tuileries and the Champs-Élysées proved much too large for the small group of soldiers to monitor effectively. Even after the arrival of Federici, maintaining law and order in the promenade would prove a difficult task. The sheer magnitude of the semi-rural space allowed for too many shaded spots for four men to adequately patrol. Much like in parks today, many criminals found ways in which to evade the roving guards.

In conclusion, the creation of the Champs-Élysées was a slow process involving several royal administrations. While the boundaries of the promenade remained virtually unchanged, the space experienced enough urbanization to appeal to the population without losing its rural essence. The location and expanse of the Champs-Élysées permitted the area to remain a liminal space for longer than the smaller parks such as the Champ Mars. Parisians flocked to the grounds to showcase the latest fashions, to escape the suffocating city, to hawk their wares, and to join together in political protest. People representative of all three estates found refuge of some sort within the confines of the Champs-Élysées. The promenade bore witness to celebration,

triumph and tragedy. It was the Champs-Élysées that the women travelled through as they returned the royal family to Paris during the march of October 1789. It was again the Champs-Élysées that witnessed the royal family's return to Paris after their failure to flee France and their arrest at Varennes in 1791. And it was during the Reign of Terror that the Place de la Concorde would be home to bloodshed as the guillotine located there claimed so many lives. Examining the creation, location, and uses of the Champs-Élysées up to and including the late eighteenth century allows the space to be viewed from a contemporary rather than a modern perspective, biased by its current use. The Champs-Élysées exists today as an avenue, but in the eighteenth century the promenade served the purposes of a large park, and from 1777 through 1791, Federici essentially played the role of park ranger.

## Chapter 3

### Maintaining the Champs-Élysées as a Transitional Space

In June 1777, the king and Comte d'Angiviller, the Director of Buildings, released an ordinance outlining a new set of laws pertaining to the Champs-Élysées. The goal was to establish a more controlled and closely regulated promenade. A known patron of the arts, the count possessed a great love for the promenade. The eleven new laws provide great insight into the status of the Champs-Élysées in 1777 and the count's desire to minimize its urbanization. In conjunction with the new laws, Comte d'Angiviller instituted a new guard in the promenade to help maintain order and enforce the new guidelines. Thus, Ferdinand Federici began his fourteen-year tenure as commanding officer of the Champs-Élysées. Born in Graubünden, Switzerland, Federici was forty-five years old when he was assigned to the promenade. Federici served twenty-four years in the Swiss Army, but his career lacked any significant achievements. He had never made it beyond the lower ranks of the guards; however, his promotion to the Champs-Élysées instantly elevated his status.<sup>46</sup>

Previous to 1777, the primary care of the promenade fell to the guards of the Tuileries Gardens, and the promenade was policed by a single soldier. The death of the

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<sup>46</sup> Arlette Farge, "Preface," in *Flagrants Délits sur les Champs-Élysées: Les Dossiers de Police du Gardien Federici (1777-1791)*, ed. Arlette Farge (Mercure de France, 2008)

soldier and the influx of people and activities into the Champs-Élysées



Figure 8: *Charles Claude de Flahaut the Billarderie (1730-1809), Count of Angiviller*:  
Jean-Baptiste Greuze (1763)

caused Comte le d'Angiviller to seek a separate and larger guard.<sup>47</sup> Louis-Auguste Affry, Colonel of the Swiss Guard, personally selected Federici to command a small

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<sup>47</sup> Letter: Angiviller to Affry, March 1777



group of three soldiers, a corporal and two inferiors, who would take up residency in the promenade. In exchange for service, Angiviller provided wages, uniforms and housing accommodations. Federici was required to submit reports to the Comte d'Angiviller and Comte d'Affry. It is interesting to note that Federici was removed from the employ of the Swiss Army while the other three guards were not. In addition to the reports, numerous correspondences pertaining to Federici and the walkway serve to define both the role and importance of the Champs-Élysées. The intimate look that the Federici documents provide allows one to see the ways in which Angiviller attempted to maintain the Champs-Élysées as a transitional space.

Rarely is the status of the Champs-Élysées as a transitional space more evident than when examining the problems encountered by Federici and his guards. As of June 1777, the promenade essentially consisted of two main parts extending from the Place Louis XV to the Etoile. The part on the north was popular for promenading and contained several cafes that provided refreshments. These establishments were considered to be of little danger and generally pleasing to the public who walked there. The large space on the south was mainly reserved for games. Walkers avoided that side of the promenade probably due to the fear of accidental injury from errant balls, for example.<sup>48</sup> Cabarets also existed in this section of the Champs-Élysées. Federici and his men were given residency on the south side of the promenade.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Letter: Affry to Angiviller, May 1770

<sup>49</sup> The sources do not specify the exact location or type of residency that Federici and his men were given. It appears as if the soldiers lived together. At one point Federici mentions that his wife remained in the

The preceding distinctions were used when determining the ways in which the promenade would be patrolled. In addition to the establishment of the guards and housing, Angiviller needed to decide the role the men would take in policing the area. He realized that the guards lacked the ability to detain criminals or to sentence them for any extended period of time. While the Champs-Élysées lay outside the jurisdiction of the Paris Lieutenant of Police, he was needed to pass judgment on anyone arrested in the promenade. This presented a problem when attempting to maintain order. The police commissioners in Paris represented an established system of justice. Although a complete understanding of eighteenth-century Paris police is not needed, an overview is required to understand the complexity surrounding the Champs-Élysées.

In 1702, Paris was divided into twenty sectors or quarters. Each quarter possessed up to three commissioners who filled numerous roles including patrolman, investigator and judge. The quarters were further divided into districts, and each commissioner was responsible for a district. Over the years new offices were added, relieving the commissioners of several duties except that of judge. Every position including that of commissioner was under the direct supervision of the Lieutenant of Police.<sup>50</sup> The lieutenant held court every Friday, at which time the commissioners would report the minor infractions occurring within their quarters. In addition, two or

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guard house during his patrols. It is stated their residence is on the left side of the promenade and it is also stated that the residence possessed a basement.

<sup>50</sup> Alan Williams, *Police of Paris* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 137

three Fridays a month, the Lieutenant presided over a *police grande*, at which time he would judge more serious charges such as vagrancy and prostitution.<sup>51</sup>

Now that the basic organization of the Paris police has been established, it is essential to examine closely the eleven laws passed in 1777. The first two laws were very similar in nature. Article 1 stated that no new establishments could be erected in the Champs-Élysées without express written consent. Included were stalls, both mobile and stationary. Article II declared no establishment could make changes or improvements without written consent or they would face removal from the promenade. These particular laws continued to present problems for Federici and Angiviller. As the influx of people into the Champs-Élysées increased, more establishments began appearing in the promenade. Worried about the impact the businesses would have on the future of the walkway, Angiviller set in place guidelines to limit the buildings. In April 1779, a M. Chalas submitted a request to construct lavatories in the Champs-Élysées. Apparently, similar conveniences existed in the Tuileries Gardens and the merchant hoped to introduce them into the promenade. The request was denied. Although the lavatories fulfilled a need, Angiviller expressed concern over the problems they might create. The Tuileries and other walkways were relatively deserted in favor of the Champs-Élysées, creating much larger crowds that sometimes led to confrontations. Women particularly were guilty of petty disagreements, including hurling insults at one another. Angiviller feared large congregations of women in a relatively small space, such as a waiting line for the lavatories, would cause additional fighting to occur.

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<sup>51</sup> Williams, 30

Consequently, the promenade was becoming more difficult to patrol. In order to avoid any further complication, the construction of the lavatories was denied.<sup>52</sup>

Halting the creeping urbanization of the promenade continued to be difficult. The land near the *Allée des Veuves* consisted of marshy plains devoted primarily to food production. Slowly throughout the eighteenth century, cabarets began appearing in the plains. When the laws were issued in 1777, a few cabarets already existed. Comte d'Angiviller evaluated their existence and determined they did not interfere with the peaceful atmosphere the promenade provided.<sup>53</sup> Despite allowing the existing cabarets to continue to operate, he wanted to prevent new ones from being developed. Angiviller and Federici both believed that the creation of new cabarets and “pleasure houses” would allow too many elements of Paris into the walkway, yet in 1783, Le Boeuf received permission from Paris Commissioner Dubois to construct a new cabaret. Le Boeuf, an established vender in the Champs-Élysées, rented land adjacent to the *Allée des Veuves*. He enclosed a portion of land, decorated his cottage, and then proceeded to construct another building. He rented it to a dance instructor who began holding formal balls for the common citizens of Paris. Angiviller’s concern was two-fold. First, he worried about balls of “that sort” being held so far removed from the jurisdiction of Paris. Second, La Boeuf had failed to follow the correct protocol in obtaining permission to build in the promenade. Angiviller appealed to Lieutenant of Police Lenoir to revoke the vendor’s license. He also reminded Lenoir that the Champs-

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<sup>52</sup> Letter: Angiviller to Federici, April 3 1779

<sup>53</sup> Letter: Affry to Angiviller, 1777

Élysées remained in the jurisdiction of the Director of King's Buildings and not the city of Paris. If the Paris commissioners possessed the ability to grant building licenses, Angiviller feared the walkway would become overrun with new buildings, destroying the delicate balance of nature preserved there.<sup>54</sup>

The problems surrounding the marshy plains worsened as the farmers became jealous of the money made by the cabarets. Federici reported farmers were increasingly misrepresenting themselves and attempting to convert their land into cabarets. M. Amat, a farmer, owned one of the cabarets already in operation in 1777. By 1783 he ran a successful wine shop and delicatessen. M. Russin, also a farmer, wanted to imitate Amat's success. He modified his cottage and began leasing it to a wine vender by the name of Lelarge. When Lelarge died, his widow left the establishment, forcing Russin to find a new merchant to lease it to. Federici received written approval for the removal of the cabaret.

The desire to profit from the farmland was not restricted to the farmers. In 1787, Federici reported that the Dames des Saint-Marie-de-Chailot had resumed their efforts to sell their farmland to a company hoping to establish a new business in the Champs-Élysées. Federici's report lacks the name of the company or the type of business. He does state that the tenant farmers were afraid they would lose their farms

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<sup>54</sup> Letter: Angiviller to Lenoir, May 1783

which served as their only means of income due to the new use to which local farmland was being put.<sup>55</sup>

Angiviller and Federici worked diligently to prevent new establishments in the Champs-Élysées without written consent. However, once the Revolution began, it quickly created a shift in power, affecting the royal offices. It did not take long for the authority Angiviller previously held to begin to decline. As Angiviller lost the ability to enforce the law, Federici sought to align with new sources of power in order to uphold the ordinance. Federici was outraged when two men began cutting down trees and constructing new buildings in the promenade. Federici does not specify what type of buildings were being constructed but states that he will do everything within his control to thwart any further disobedience. Apparently, people were using their new claimed political “freedom” as justification for breaking the law. Federici appealed to the police commissioners to assist him. During the first few months of the Revolution, Federici seemed hopeful in the relationship he was attempting to build with the districts in Paris. He often mentioned the confidence the National Guard had in his ability to provide service to the administration. It is unknown whether or not he was successful in this particular endeavor. As the Revolution continued, his ability to uphold the ordinances seemed to have declined rather rapidly.<sup>56</sup>

By 1790, Federici regularly attended the meetings of the district committees. Through these meeting he attempted to exert some semblance of influence. At this time

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<sup>55</sup> Report: January 1787

<sup>56</sup> :Letter: Federici to Angiviller, September 1789

he still remained in contact with Angiviller, but he was trying to gain footing within the new regime that was steadily replacing the old one. One is left to assume that he hoped to gain the trust of the committee so that he could continue to carry out the wishes of Angiviller. A man by the name of M. Latour requested approximately forty feet in the walkway in order to construct a tent to use for entertainment. The majority of the committee was in favor of granting the request. Federici reminded the council that the King and his Director of Buildings consistently refused new establishments in the promenade due to their ability to hurt the appeal of the walkway. He also reminded the committee that when the French guards began practicing in the walkway, they first gained permission from the Director of Buildings. The committee agreed to send the request to the Lieutenant Mayor who administered the public promenades, but the requests were rapidly increasing, leaving Federici more and more powerless to stop them. Indeed, Federici became convinced that the appeals to have him discharged from his residence concealed an attempt to turn it into a cabaret.

Article III denied any merchant the right to display his goods on the ground or on ropes hung between the trees. Doing so would result in removal from the Champs-Élysées. Federici attempted to closely monitor the vendors that sold their wares in the promenade. The goal was to provide the people with goods but to prevent the merchants from encroaching on the comfort of the visitors or the established businesses. In addition, royal officials did not want the promenade to become a continuous fair. Federici did not hesitate to seek removal for any vendors he felt were a disservice to the promenade. Angiviller originally had decided to allow vendors to hawk baked goods in

the Champs-Élysées; they were collectively known as the cake merchants. These merchants were allowed to wander the walkway with baskets full of pastries.<sup>57</sup> After several years of observation, however, Federici asked Angiviller to revoke their privileges. Federici stated that the cake merchants were frauds who detracted from the enjoyment of the walkway. He claimed they not only created a distraction for the walkers but also stole goods from the reputable cafes.

In 1790, Angiviller was forced to write the mayor of Paris in an attempt to uphold the law. Seeking to take advantage of the recent upheaval of the Revolution, people began applying for permits from lesser officials of Paris, not the director. Within a matter of months, the police awarded ten new permits to peddlers. Peddlers were notorious for blocking bridges and other structures in the city with their displayed goods. Angiviller wanted to maintain his walkways as a transitional space while also eliminating the elements which could impair the relaxation the promenade provided. He greatly disapproved of the peddlers that not only hampered movement in the city but also harassed the people. As the Revolution intensified the count began losing the power to enforce the laws he had initiated. He was reduced to begging the Paris police to take action.<sup>58</sup>

Article IV stated that no one was allowed to sell or rent chairs to anyone without the appropriate permit. At first glance, the provision appeared a minor rule, but its enforcement actually proved to be a fairly large problem for Federici. The promenade

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<sup>57</sup> Report: September 1787

<sup>58</sup> Letter: Angiviller to Federici, May 1787



offered the visitor many forms of entertainment, including sporting events and refreshments. In addition, during festivals and holidays there were often special shows. Permits were granted by the office of the Director of Buildings allowing merchants to lease or sell chairs to the visitors of the Champs-Élysées. The chairs were used for sitting while enjoying the entertainments listed above or for relaxing after a nice walk. Often vendors without the appropriate permit would attempt to undercut those with the legal right to lease the chairs, similar to modern day scalpers. Even owning a café did not automatically include the right to lease chairs. They were allowed to provide a specific type of stool to their customers.

For example, M. and Mme. Démasures owned a café and, instead of using the proper stools, they continued to place chairs around their establishment. Federici warned them several times to remove the chairs, as they directly affected the business of M. Ondin, who possessed a legal permit to sell and rent chairs. Apparently when the ordinance was released, café owners were forced to replace their chairs with the prescribed stools, unless they applied for a permit. Every year a notice was placed in the doorways of the cafes, and every year the Démasures ignored the law.<sup>59</sup> Angiviller threatened to remove cafés without permits if the chairs were not exchanged. Although not directly stated, it can be assumed the permits were purchased. M. Ondin encountered problems again after the onset of the Revolution. François Demouger began leasing chairs in the promenade despite warnings. Federici arrested him and sent him to the National Guard in Paris. Apparently, the Civil Committee for the district

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<sup>59</sup> Letter: Federici to Angiviller, 1787

Feuillants provided him with a certificate allowing him to lease chairs, to the detriment of M. Ondin.<sup>60</sup>

Article V stated that carriages or horses were not allowed to stray from off their designated lanes. Specifically, no visitors, regardless of their social class, were allowed to enter the staggered rows or planted areas of the Champs-Élysées. Carriages often presented a problem to the walkway. If they deviated from the designated paths, they could damage the grounds of the promenade. What is more, carriages also provided a quicker getaway for those participating in illicit activities. Most of the men engaging in duels arrived by carriage and were able to escape the guards, who were often on foot.

Article VI forbade any person to lead horses into the planted sections of the promenade. The penalty for breaking the law included a ten pound fine and impoundment of the horse. Federici, intimidated by nobleman, often failed to stop them when they broke the ordinances. He did include their misdeeds in the reports he sent to Angiviller. If Angiviller thought the infractions were serious, he would address them on Federici's behalf. Angiviller certainly considered destruction to the promenade to be a serious offense. When the Comte d'Coëtlogon insisted on riding his horse through the staggered rows of the promenade, Angiviller did not hesitate to intercede. The count was warned that no man could break the law, no matter his rank or station. Angiviller reminded him that not even the King's horses were allowed inside the planted sections

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<sup>60</sup> Report: September 1789

of the promenade. If he continued to break the law, Federici was at liberty to impose the punishment.<sup>61</sup>

While striving to protect the natural state of the promenade, Angiviller also wanted to make improvements. He complained that too many gaps existed near the entrance of the Coliseum allowing people to enter on horseback; he wanted the gaps fixed to alleviate the problem. The gaps not only allowed too many violators to escape, but Angiviller also did not want the horses to damage the walkways. The main walkway was large enough to allow those on horseback to ride without infringing on the other lanes popular for promenading. By fixing the gaps it would force the riders to stay within the designated borders.<sup>62</sup>

Article VII denied people the right to shoot fireworks or firearms of any kind at any time. Maintaining the Champs-Élysées as a transitional space was not Federici's only concern, as the safety of the people remained a critical task. In an attempt to safeguard the patrons, Angiviller wanted to prevent any bloodshed by banning firearms. He also hoped to lessen the chances of fire by putting an end to the firework displays. In addition, Federici encountered problems with bands of roving armed men entering the promenade. When stopped, the men would reply they were tax farmers<sup>63</sup>; however, they refused to provide proof of their titles. Firearms were prohibited in the walkway but tax farmers were given special permissions to carry arms. Tax farmers occupied

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<sup>61</sup> Letter: Angiviller to Count Coëtlogon, 1779

<sup>62</sup> Letter: Angiviller to Coustou, July 1779

<sup>63</sup> During the Ancien Regime tax farmers belonged to an outsourced customs and excise operation whose primary function was to collect taxes for the king

two residences in the walkway and frequently crossed the promenade. As a result, Federici felt torn. He knew the tax farmers could not be penalized, but without identification he could not be sure they were legitimate. Angiviller created regulations requiring that the tax farmers identify themselves and warn the guard of their presence.<sup>64</sup>

Article VIII stated that no business men, including venders, farmers or caterers could deposit any type of trash (including manure) onto the grounds of the promenade. The first offense would result in a ten pound fine and multiple offenses would result in imprisonment. Preserving the beauty of the Champs-Élysées proved, over and again, extremely important to Angiviller. He thought that trash greatly detracted from the aesthetic appeal of the promenade. He understood the walkway contained businesses and estates, but did not believe they had the right to clutter or desecrate the tranquil scenery. The duc de Luxembourg took offense at the treatment that members of his household received when they broke the law. His estate was adjacent to the property of the marquise Argenson. One of the duke's servants was arrested when he refused to move fertilizer and stones stacked near a small house which sat between their properties. The duke insisted the nobility should be exempt from the above ordinance due to their social rank. He insisted that the nobility retained the right to build barriers near their homes. Luxembourg maintained that even if the law must be upheld, there was no reason to apply it with such rigor. Any type of trash or disruption to the

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<sup>64</sup> Letter: Angiviller to Mazirères, December, 1778

promenade resulted in at least a warning. Also, any man caught defecating in the promenade was arrested and detained a few hours, until later released.

Article IX established that all games must be played only in their designated location near the river. Games proved to be one of the biggest problems that the guard faced. People of all social classes engaged in the games played in the promenade. Nobles, students, and other members of the third estate all enjoyed both playing and spectating games such as tennis. Unfortunately the games often caused either a distraction for the walkers or a dispute among the players. Federici arrested three men who played ball in the promenade and began amusing themselves by throwing the balls at the heads of men, women and children.<sup>65</sup> In another instance, two men were arrested who started a fight over a bet placed on the outcome of a game of tennis.<sup>66</sup>

The game of *barres* frequently caused problems in the promenade. Whereas the other games presented problems such as injuries to nearby walkers, etc., *barres* actually did damage to the walkway itself. Federici was particularly opposed to the game for that reason. The players used the staggered rows and planted areas as part of the game. Several of the players were repeat offenders. A wine merchant, by the name of M. Drapier was stopped thirteen times for refusing to stop playing *barres* in the staggered rows of the promenade.<sup>67</sup> There does not seem to be a specific punishment associated with participating in the games, as no mention is made of the actual arrest of M.

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<sup>65</sup> Report: 1787

<sup>66</sup> Report: 1783

<sup>67</sup> Report: April 24

Drapier. Federici was genuinely horrified by the people's ability to destroy a beautiful area provided to them by the King for their own enjoyment. He did not understand how Parisians could take for granted such a wonderful space, maintained at the king's own expense. His frustration grew with his inability to punish offenders such as Drapier.

Local schools presented what was undoubtedly the largest problem to the Swiss Guard. Teachers brought their *collège* students to the Champs-Elysees for fresh air and exercise.<sup>68</sup> The pupils frequently played *barres*. Unfortunately for Federici, these students caused turmoil. The first incident occurred in April of 1778. A group of students were playing *barres*, and knocked down men, women and children who were in the walkway. The guards stopped the game, and the pupils refused to answer any questions directed at them. The teacher accompanying the students refused to contain the youth or to name the school they attended. Angiviller's desire for the walkway to maintain its peaceful atmosphere continued to be the driving force behind his actions. He loved the promenade's popularity and did not want anything to detract from its tranquility. When Federici informed him of the incident with the students, Angiviller wrote to the inspector responsible for the schools. Angiviller advised Duval<sup>69</sup> to ensure the students did not disturb the walkway or the king would ban all games and deny the student's entrance.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Both *college* and university students visited the promenade and caused problems with the Swiss Guard. Most likely the students were between the ages of fifteen and nineteen.

<sup>69</sup> Duval's title is Inspector; however, in the letter Angiviller writes to Duval, he references his position as head of all the local high schools.

<sup>70</sup> Letter: Angiviller to Inspector Duval, April 1778

Nearly a year later, Federici had another run-in with a group of students. Yet again a crowd of young pupils began acting disorderly when playing a game of *barres*. The students replied they were pupils of an important local academy. Federici was under the misconception that he could not arrest the young men. Angiviller informed Federici that the quality of a person did not exempt them from arrest. Federici was advised to see Lenoir to ensure the guilty parties would not be released when taken to the commissioners.<sup>71</sup>

Remarkably, no further incidents occurred for over a year; however, in 1780 the friction between the promenade's guards and the students erupted once again. During the summer, a greater number of students began frequenting the walkway. Tension grew as the youth seemed particularly restless. The teachers who were meant to control the students seemed to be incapable of doing so. On Friday July 28, approximately six hundred pupils were in the promenade. The widow Brunelle rented gaming equipment such as the balls and a marker, but she did not charge the students who wished to rent equipment. The youth became rowdy and did not want to return the equipment at the allotted time. The Swiss guards reminded the revelers that they were not allowed to disturb the peace of the walkway, but the pupils chanted that they were not afraid of the guard. A student by the name of Langlois, the son of a well-to-do book seller, incited the others to riot. As the guards led him away, the other youth began throwing stones at the back of the corporal. In the tumult that followed, another student was injured as

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<sup>71</sup> Letter: Angiviller to Federici, April 1779

well, and so the students began yelling for the death of the Swiss guards.<sup>72</sup> The guard managed to send to Paris for backup to help disperse the crowd. Angiviller expressed pride in the guard's ability to remain calm and ensure the situation was kept from escalating further. The nearest commissioner the guard could procure was M. Ferrand from the rue des Lombards. Despite a full report given to Ferrand describing the riot, he chose to release the student.

Angiviller received notice that the students would return to the Champs-Élysées on Wednesday August 2. In preparation for their arrival, the guard was doubled. However, Angiviller did not believe the precaution was enough to stop a possible insurrection. He wanted to ban all *collège* students from the promenade entirely. A ministerial letter was sent to the Rector of Universities advising him of the impending ban. He also demanded Langlois be sentenced to a few days in prison or be expelled from school indefinitely.<sup>73</sup>

Lenoir worked with the Vice-Chancellor and Commissioner Dubois on a way to prevent any disturbance on the upcoming school holiday. The universities and *collèges* were instructed to keep their students from entering the walkway. In addition, the commissioners agreed to place extra soldiers around the promenade to prevent any imminent plots by the students. Lenoir informed Angiviller that the actions of Ferrand were justified. He stated that students were not to be arrested and taken to prison. Although this was a direct contradiction to Angiviller's earlier orders, the

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<sup>72</sup> Letter: Fabian to Angiviller, 1780

<sup>73</sup> Memoire of Angiviller, 1780



commissioners had come to an agreement that students would not be sentenced in the heat of the moment. Judgment would be passed once everyone had time to calm down and all of the facts had been uncovered. Lenoir reminded Angiviller that the commissioners were under heavy scrutiny, and must look at all facts, whereas the guards were only concerned with the immediate arrest. The commissioners had rules to follow, and if there was any doubt, they could not decide a punishment.<sup>74</sup>

The efforts of Angiviller and Lenoir had the desired effect and the day passed without incident. The king issued a writ stating that the student Langlois must serve three days in prison. Lenoir requested a meeting with the student before he served his sentence. Lenoir declared Langlois to be a simple and modest student just as his teachers had described him. Lenoir maintained that his only wrongdoing was in not retreating when the guard demanded it. He further argued that the youth should not have been imprisoned. Lenoir praised Ferrand for his original decision not to imprison the youth. Nonetheless, Ferrand received additional praise from Lenoir when he carried out the king's writ and imprisoned the boy despite his objections.

Unfortunately, conflict between the schools and the promenade continued to be a major problem. Angiviller had lifted the ban on students, allowing the head masters to bring their pupils back to the promenade to engage in games and fresh air. In 1786, trouble began again. This time the teachers received the brunt of the blame. Angiviller felt that the teachers were inciting instead of calming the tempers of the youth. Nicolas

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<sup>74</sup> Letter: Lenoir to Angiviller, August 1780

Gauthier, head master, and Louis Michel Dinamore, a student, engaged in a heated argument with a guard. The students were visiting from the Louis-le-Grand school. Gauthier claimed the soldier attacked Dinamore and he was only defending the student. According to Federici, both Gauthier and Dinamore incited the other pupils to attempt to disarm the soldiers. A patrol from a neighboring district was called to disband the crowd. Gauthier and Dinamore were arrested and taken away by carriage. As they drove away, the students followed the carriage, shouting threats. Angiviller called for the immediate dismissal of the headmaster and for the school to dole out severe punishment to the student.<sup>75</sup> Due to the aforementioned case of Langlois, Angiviller sought punishment for the teacher as opposed to the more inexperienced youth. After deliberation, Gauthier served eight days in prison but was allowed to continue in his assigned post. The school handled the punishment of the student as was advised by Angiviller.<sup>76</sup>

Schools typically lacked an enclosed area where the students could participate in games or other physical activity. In addition, the students were not allowed to play in the streets of Paris. The schools contended that it was important for their pupils to be able to engage in physical activity. Therefore, the teachers were instructed to take the youth to the Bois de Boulogne instead of the Champs-Élysées; however, the walk was much farther and they were forced to cross the Champs-Élysées in order to get there. Because of the distance of the Bois de Boulogne, the students were often tempted to

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<sup>75</sup> Letter: Angiviller to Bérardier (headmaster of the high school Louis-le-Grand) , July, 1786

<sup>76</sup> Letter: Breteuil to Angiviller, August 1786

stop and rest in the promenade.<sup>77</sup> Despite these facts, Angiviller seemed forced to ban all students' entry to the promenade. He understood the need for the youth to participate in the games the promenade offered, but he also believed that they had abused the privilege.

Article X denied any person without written permission to graze animals in the Champs-Élysées. The first offense resulted in the fine of five pounds per head of cattle, and the second offense resulted in the seizure of the animal. For years, the residents of surrounding estates were accustomed to sending their animals to graze in the fields of the Champs-Élysées. As the popularity of the promenade grew, the animals became more of a hindrance. Not only did the animals' feces present an aesthetic problem, but they would damage the earth as well. Angiviller did not want to take away privileges granted to nobility but wanted to minimize the impact the animals had on the promenade. M. Culliver was allowed to graze his cows as long as he reduced the number from eighteen to twelve. M. Jansin's cook was allowed to graze three animals. Marchioness Bruny was also granted permission to send her cow to the promenade.<sup>78</sup> It was decided that the cows could graze near the faubourg Saint-Honoré, but any animals on the other side of the promenade would be expelled. Furthermore, the cows had to be done grazing by midday or earlier depending on the day of the week. This compromise allowed the animals to graze and get exercise without spoiling the

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<sup>77</sup> Letter: Bérardier to Angiviller, August 1786

<sup>78</sup> Letter: Federici to Angiviller, January 1778

mood of the walkway.<sup>79</sup> Despite the posted laws containing specific fines, Angiviller seemed cautious when dispensing punishments. For example, a man (nameless in the records) repeatedly grazed cows and a goat on the Etiole without written permission. He had already received several warnings before Angiviller told Federici to absolutely prevent it from occurring again.

Article XI forbade any person from doing any damage to the trees planted in the promenade. Any action resulting in significant damage to the trees would require imprisonment. It appears that Angiviller and Federici were very protective of the trees of the promenade. On one occasion, at approximately 8:30 pm, a carriage driver abandoned his horses to go see a fire that had broken out at the Coliseum. Shots scared the horses who took flight into the staggered rows of the promenade. In the process the animals nearly trampled several people and damaged several trees. Federici wanted to impound the horses until the damage was paid for. The commissioner, however, would not allow the horses to be detained. Federici asked the commissioner to make a pledge for the amount of damage done, but the commissioner refused. Although Federici's attempts at justice failed, the incident illustrates the passion he felt for the natural beauty of the walkway.

In accordance with the law, Federici also banned kite flying in the promenade. The kites presented two problems relevant to the regulation. First, when the kites collided with the trees, the initial impact could injure the foliage. Second, the children

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<sup>79</sup> Memoire of Angiviller

often climbed the trees in order to fetch their kites. Not only did the possibility of additional mutilation to the trees exist, but the children could fall and hurt themselves.

Although the law only specified damage done to trees, Federici attempted to protect the walkway from all types of damage. For example, one of the functions of the promenade was military drills. Often the royal guard of Paris performed their routine drills in the park. The drills were big events involving many important officials from the city and lasted several days. Federici sought to minimize the impending physical damage dealt to the walkway by making four requests. First, he requested that the tent makers take the utmost care in constructing the tents to avoid any unnecessary damage done to the ground. Second, he asked that the soldiers form their drills superficially without digging too much into the ground. Third, he wanted only the horses absolutely necessary for the drills to gain admittance into the grounds. Lastly, Federici requested only three carriages be allowed entrance: those of the Baron Breteuil, M. Dubois and M. de Crosne. It is uncertain whether or not Federici's requests were met.<sup>80</sup>

The ordinance was not the only set of laws Federici attempted to uphold during his tenure as head of the guard of the Champs-Élysées. Several other offenses were considered detrimental to the wellbeing of the walkway and warranted harsh punishment. Begging and vagrancy were crimes that would not be tolerated. Begging disrupted the tranquility of the people promenading and carried with it a stigma that could threaten the reputation of the Champs-Élysées. Unfortunately for the officials,

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<sup>80</sup> Letter: Federici to Angiviller, April 1786

begging was fairly common. In 1783, Jacques Faussard, an “impertinent” beggar, was arrested and sent to prison.<sup>81</sup> Again in 1787, Federici arrested a woman who had committed her second offense of begging. Between 1777 and 1791, ninety-three instances of begging were reported. Federici claimed that the early years of the Revolution saw a dramatic rise in the crime. The district committee informed Federici they could not be of assistance in the matter, causing Federici to seek advice from Angiviller on how to expel the growing numbers of beggars.<sup>82</sup> Vagrancy was also heavily frowned upon. Federici frequently found evidence of vagrants and, if caught, they were arrested and sent to a commissioner. When several people broke into a small structure owned by a M. Fabre and took refuge there, Federici was unable to catch the culprits.<sup>83</sup>

Prostitution was another crime that plagued the walkway. Throughout his fourteen-year tenure, Federici reported one hundred and four instances of sexual offenses. Although prostitution was considered a serious offense, it seems as if the majority of the women arrested were released after a few hours of detention.<sup>84</sup> A few of the entries are vague and do not specify the exact reason the females were detained, but one can assume it was for illicit sexual activity. Even more curious, when Federici does report sexual misdeeds, he rarely specifies prostitution. French historian, Laurent Turcot, catalogued the crimes into a chart categorizing the crimes. He included

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<sup>81</sup> Report: June 1783

<sup>82</sup> Letter: Federici to Angiviller, August 1789

<sup>83</sup> Report: January 1778

<sup>84</sup> Report: 1783

prostitution but failed to make any other distinctions between sexual crimes. As unclear as Federici is, in many of his reports, it seems impossible to lump all sexual crimes into such a specific subheading. If he detained a female for engaging in a sexual act, it cannot be automatically assumed it was prostitution. There are too many unanswered questions. Was she willing? Was it rape? Was it a lovers' tryst or a paid service? Prostitution was not the only sexual crime committed in the Champs-Élysées. Federici arrested an older man who committed a sexual act with a much younger boy. The man was a police captain and was released after promising to abstain from any future indecency.<sup>85</sup> Sexual misdeeds, much like violence, seem particularly drawn to the shadowy, hidden cover that a transitional space provides. Not all recreational activity provided by the Champs-Élysées was of a legal nature.

Fighting and dueling accounted for the largest number of crimes in the walkway. Duels were illegal in Paris; therefore, people sought a safer refuge to indulge in this illicit activity. Since the Champs-Élysées lay outside the jurisdiction of the city, it became a haven for people searching for a dark empty space in which to fight. It cannot be a coincidence that fighting and dueling combined constituted the largest percentage of crimes committed in the promenade. There were three hundred fifty-one total fights and duels, constituting approximately thirty-one percent of all offenses. Violence was not limited to a particular social class, but instead transcended all levels of society. The distinction lay in the types of violence committed. Generally, the nobility utilized the

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<sup>85</sup> Report: April 1778

Champs-Élysées for formal dueling<sup>86</sup>, whereas the lower classes engaged in fistfights. Fighting will be examined more thoroughly when the inadequacies of the guard are discussed.



Figure 9: *Jean-Charles-Pierre Lenoir aka Le Noir, 1732 - 1807 Lieutenant of Police, Paris in the 18th century* From XVIII Siècle Institutions, Usages et Costumes, published Paris 1875.

By 1777, Jean-Charles Lenoir held the position of Lieutenant of Police. Since the Champs-Élysées was obviously outside Paris, it did not belong to any specific quarter's jurisdiction. Therefore, Angiviller worked with Lenoir to create a system for

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<sup>86</sup> The majority of the duels appear to have been sword duels. The injuries Federici references are caused by swords. This does not mean no pistol duels occurred.



infractions committed in the Champs-Élysées. Federici delivered suspects he arrested to the guard station located on Marigny Street, along with a report of the infraction. The district commissioner was responsible for assessing whether or not to detain the suspect and send him to court on the next Friday. Neither Comte d'Angiviller nor Lenoir specify which district Marigny belonged, but it seems most likely to have fallen within the jurisdiction of the Palais-Royal.

Comte d'Angiviller instructed all commissioners and soldiers to treat Federici with the respect owed to a commanding officer of a district in Paris.<sup>87</sup> Unfortunately, Federici found it difficult to work with the commissioners in Paris, and during his many years commanding the promenade, several problems arose between the two parties. Often the commissioners disregarded both Federici and the area he patrolled. Many of the suspects sent to them were dismissed with little or no penalty. This was a direct result of both the lack of respect given to Federici and the districts not willing to concern themselves with an area outside of their jurisdiction. As early as April 1778, Angiviller wrote Lenoir with complaints regarding Commissioner Le Gretz. On April 8<sup>th</sup> Federici arrested three individuals who had beaten bloody two men who were strolling the Champs-Élysées with their female companions. Le Gretz ordered the suspects to pay a small compensation to the victims and dismissed them. The same day Federici arrested two men impersonating Parisian guards. The two men used a pipe to beat a wine vender in the face, nearly killing him. After claiming to be tax collectors,

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<sup>87</sup> Letter: Angiviller to Lenoir, June 4 1777

LeGretz dismissed the men with no penalty.<sup>88</sup> Both instances illustrate blatant disregard for Federici's authority. Angiviller attempted to intercede on behalf of Federici; however, the problem continued throughout his tenure.

The commissioners were not the only ones to fail to show respect to Federici. The people of Paris knew Federici was not a commissioner; they realized that he could neither imprison nor sentence suspects. He was often criticized and ridiculed. In April 1781, M. Rochoux filed a complaint with Comte Angiviller protesting his treatment while in the Champs-Élysées. Rochoux claimed to have been arrested by the Swiss Guard while attempting to observe a game of *barres*. He stated that as he worked his way into the crowd, he was stopped by a guard who refused to let him proceed. After a few words were exchanged, he was taken to Federici's residence where he was locked in the cellar for several hours. Rochoux stated that Federici seemed to minimize his mistreatment by informing him there was an actual dungeon where criminals were kept. The attitude of the people is best summarized by Rochoux's following remark, "Since when can a man of Federici's rank, an inspector of the Champs-Élysées, the head of a patrol or at best a patrol commander without jurisdiction, have possession of a prison or even worse a dungeon?"<sup>89</sup> In September 1787, d'Aulmont, a French nobleman, also submitted a complaint to Angiviller. He stated that while innocently sitting in the Champs-Élysées, he was accosted and harassed by the Swiss Guards. According to

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<sup>88</sup> Letter: Angiviller to Lenoir, April 1778

<sup>89</sup> Letter: Rochoux to Angiviller, 1781

d'Aulmont, Federici took his sword, a representation of his noble status.<sup>90</sup> Aulmont refused to name his noble family, insisting that his sword be returned without having to do so. He argued that his elevated status automatically made him exempt from the guard's questioning.

Later the same year, Federici began receiving death threats from the son of a well-to-do Paris trader. Although not noble, the man making the threats was wealthy. M. Devineau, a known and respected swordsman who was offended because he had been detained and chastised by Federici, continued to return to the Champs-Élysées in an attempt to gain revenge. He taunted and teased Federici in an attempt to provoke a fight. Angiviller enlisted the aid of Baron Breteuil to expel the man from Paris in order to avoid what he predicted could be bloodshed.<sup>91</sup> Not only did noblemen lack respect for Federici and his promenade, but the men that he stopped would also feign noble affiliations in order to avoid arrest. When Federici stopped a man on horseback for violating regulations, the man stated he was riding one of the King's horses. He continued by saying he was in the employ of a local duke. He provided Federici a false name. The man escaped arrest, and despite attempts at locating him, Federici made no further mention of him. Angiviller instructed Federici to disregard social status when making arrests in the promenade, but the task proved easier in theory than in practice. Often noblemen and well-to-do members of the bourgeoisie filed complaints related to

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<sup>90</sup> Letter: Aulmont to Angiviller, 1787

<sup>91</sup> Letter: Angiviller to Breteuil, September 1787

Federici in an attempt to have him dismissed. Angiviller repeatedly came to Federici's defense, allowing him to retain his post.

In addition to the inability to garner respect and establish authority in the promenade, the geographic location of the Champs-Élysées regularly proved to be an obstacle to effective enforcement. Federici was often forced to rely on supplemental soldiers from Paris. Dubois, head of the Guard of Paris, agreed to send twenty infantry and eight cavalry to the promenade on Thursdays, Sundays, and holidays.<sup>92</sup> The extra soldiers arrived in the afternoon and patrolled the grounds until sunset, roughly four hours. In addition, soldiers from the Guard of Paris were sent to patrol the walkway at night while Federici and his men slept. Any crises occurring outside of these usual parameters required Federici to send for help. Depending on the situation, sending for help presented its own problems. Federici was already short-staffed, and losing an additional man could be difficult. Local districts were obligated to send aid to the promenade, but it could be a timely intervention.

In addition, the extra patrols sent to Federici sometimes caused further problems. In April 1784, two soldiers of the guard were caught committing sexual acts with prostitutes. When they were confronted, one of them struck a corporal of the Swiss Guard on the head. Bringing the men into the guardroom of the Champs-Élysées caused a large crowd to gather, forcing Federici to send for a commissioner and

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<sup>92</sup> Letter: Dubois to Angiviller, June 1777

additional soldiers to disperse the crowd.<sup>93</sup> Another Swiss soldier was sent to the guard house for accepting bribes to allow peddlers into the promenade.<sup>94</sup>

After the onset of the Revolution, problems with the new National Guard of the city of Paris increased. In August 1789, fighting erupted among five soldiers of the Salis Sancade regiment (Swiss soldiers); however, the soldiers were not Federici's men. Sensing the presence of alcohol, Federici was afraid the soldiers would resist the members of the National Guard located at the guard house. He was able to make peace between all parties involved in the incident; however, fighting between the Swiss and national Guard soldiers continued to escalate. Federici's concern intensified as he reported soldiers were continuously opposing the will of their commanders. Federici's ability to adequately patrol the promenade lessened with the increase of problems among the Swiss guards. It was during this time large numbers of Swiss guards began deserting their posts throughout Paris.<sup>95</sup> He worried that the discontent spreading among the Swiss guards in Paris might reach his own men. In addition, the new National Guard frequently engaged in fighting amongst themselves. One summer evening, members of the guard took their weapons to the Coliseum, where they fought in front of spectators. Eventually they were separated and sent away. A few days later, Federici was forced to send away two members of the National Guard for fighting in the walkway. The purpose of the soldiers in the Champs-Élysées was to aid Federici in

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<sup>93</sup> Letter: Angiviller to Breteuil, May 1784

<sup>94</sup> Report: Sept 17 1787

<sup>95</sup> Letter: Federici to Angiviller, December 1789

patrolling the promenade, but as previously stated, at times they proved to be detrimental to keeping the peace.<sup>96</sup>

More often than not, if there was a large crowd, suspects managed to get away. In March 1778, long after sunset, a large band of duelers was spotted in the walkway. At least six men were participating in the duels while others watched. The guards were able to scatter the swordsmen and crowd, but they lacked the manpower to physically detain the duelers.<sup>97</sup> On a separate occasion a fight broke out between a group of twelve to fourteen boys who were apprentice shoemakers. The guards were able to arrest only two of the boys while the others fled.<sup>98</sup> The two boys were sent to the commissioner to ensure they were not guilty of any other crime and to evaluate their physical conditions. The boys were bruised but not significantly hurt.

The recurring problem of not having a large enough guard can be seen time and again in the promenade. Before the Revolution began, Angiviller noted the growing agitation of the people of Paris. In June 1788, Federici recognized this restlessness. A group of people began taunting Federici's men, who in response, pulled their weapons. The women gathered stones and threw them at the guards and then hid behind their men. Soldiers were hurt during the riot, and Federici greatly feared the event would repeat itself the following Sunday. Eventually, Federici successfully requested the addition of two more Swiss soldiers to help maintain the promenade, but even the

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<sup>96</sup> Before the Revolution a large number of the soldiers in Paris were Swiss, but not all of them were. The use of the word soldier in this thesis refers to any soldier sent to the promenade to help patrol the area.

<sup>97</sup> Report: March 1778

<sup>98</sup> Report: January, 1778

addition of the men was not sufficient against the large crowds.<sup>99</sup> Angiviller advised Federici to maintain his patrol, but in light of the growing fermentation of the city, to overlook minor infractions.<sup>100</sup> Angiviller wanted to avoid possible injury whenever possible and did not want to provoke riots that could possibly overwhelm the small patrol.

As the Revolution swept across Paris, changes quickly began to affect Angiviller, Federici, and the promenade. As stated earlier, Angiviller rapidly lost the influence he had possessed leading up to the Storming of the Bastille. The Champs-Élysées, as a transitional space, belonged to the Ancien Regime. Since the Champs-Élysées has been owned and maintained by the king, the revolutionary government cared little for its maintenance. Angiviller and Federici had opposed urban expansion, throwing all their energy into preserving the promenade as a park. Angiviller and Federici formed a bond that in many ways transcended social boundaries. Federici was Angiviller's subordinate in every way, yet Federici wrote to him with a candor oblivious of social distinction. While Federici always showed Angiviller the respect he was owed, the two shared an unexpected friendship. At the center of it all was the Champs-Élysées.

As early as September 1789, the changes brought on by the Revolution could be seen. Not only did the National Guard begin training battalions in the transitional space but they also began sending patrols there. The soldiers arrested people to whom

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<sup>99</sup> Letter: Federici to Angiviller, 1786

<sup>100</sup> Report: Federici July 9 1788

Angiviller had provided special permissions, forcing him to intercede on their behalf.<sup>101</sup> In addition, sweeping changes were made to the internal order of the municipal police: every member of the police was replaced. With the changes, Federici began receiving threats to his position. An anonymous person called for his expulsion from his residence, including the destruction of his property. The threat proved empty but serves to illustrate the way in which the tides were turning within the city.

While Federici was not always popular with the people of Paris, he was nonetheless beloved by those whom he served. Angiviller frequently praised his dedication, loyalty, and good character. Federici remained in control of the promenade, but his authority was greatly reduced. By the end of August 1789, his Swiss Guards were no longer allowed to carry weapons and were granted only the cartridge pouches. The only time Federici's men were allowed to carry weapons was in conjunction with the bourgeois National Guard. Swiss guards began abandoning their posts. Sixty Swiss soldiers were captured and returned to Paris, and a warrant officer was executed.<sup>102</sup> Federici did not want to share their fate. Instead he continued to stay at the promenade in an attempt to enter the good graces of the new bourgeois army.<sup>103</sup>

Federici attempted to make himself useful in any way possible. He volunteered to find housing for new members of the National Guard within the borders of the

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<sup>101</sup> Letter: Angiviller to Federici, August 1789

<sup>102</sup> The Swiss soldiers who began abandoning their posts were members of the Royal Guard who were placed throughout Paris. None of the soldiers listed belonged to Federici. No specific names or regiments were listed. As the Revolution gained steam, friction developed between the new National Guard and the Ancien Regime Swiss Regiments

<sup>103</sup> Letter: Federici to Angiviller, 1789



Champs-Élysées. In addition, he was assigned the task of preparing the residency for the incoming soldiers. There existed some dispute over the ownership of the building Federici selected for the soldiers. In an attempt to gain favor, Federici asked Angiviller if the land could be “sacrificed” to the nation in a show of good will. He attended committee meetings and made military recommendations. In October 1790, Federici was voted into the city police by the civil and permanent committee. The position was profitless in terms of money, but Federici perceived the accomplishment as a blow to the detractors who wanted him removed from the walkway.

Despite the growing turmoil, Angiviller continued to support Federici. He sent a letter to the marquis de Fayette, commander of the National Guard, advising him of the importance of maintaining a guard in the walkway. He believed that the Champs-Élysées served as an asylum to a group of people lacking morality, i.e., impertinent beggars and vagrants searching for the means and opportunity to enter the adjacent gardens, prostitutes, perverts, and those looking to fight. He contended that the recent events created an even greater need for security in the park. He maintained his desire for the Champs-Élysées to be a safe place for those who lived there, crossed through it, or visited it for pleasure.<sup>104</sup> Federici used every opportunity which presented itself to suggest to the committee they uphold Angiviller’s laws. There is no indication of whether or not the National Police continued to adhere to the guidelines provided by

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<sup>104</sup> During Federici’s fourteen year tenure, there were other people who lived inside or on the border of the Champs-Élysées. Some of the farmers lived on the land they cultivated. In addition, there were members of the nobility that owned residences that were considered inside the borders of the Champs-Elysees.

Federici and Angiviller. Angiviller had entrusted Federici with the power to maintain the promenade, but the task proved too large for one man. The two men worked diligently until the Revolution took control, and both men lost their positions leaving the walkway in the hands of the new government. Angiviller, accused of squandering public money, left France in 1790. With Angiviller gone, there was no one left to champion the Champs-Élysées, and in December of 1791, the king transferred the transitional space to the municipality of Paris.

## Chapter 4

### Conclusion

In the end, how successful was Angiviller? Robert Isherwood argues that “despite all the money pumped into it, the whole enterprise of the Champs-Élysées was not successful as a recreation area.”<sup>105</sup> In light of the evidence presented in both the Federici documents and contemporary quotes, his argument seems to have little merit. Obviously, the contemporary documents illustrate the attraction of the Champs-Élysées. According to Isherwood there were numerous problems that lessened the promenade’s popularity, and each one of Isherwood’s points can be disputed. He claims that the land was dangerous, and even after the improvements, it continued to cause problems for the visitors. Isherwood states the failure of the Saint-Ovid fair and the Coliseum further alienated potential users of the space. The failure of the Coliseum surely frustrated investors, but there is no indication that it harmed the popularity of the promenade. In fact, after 1780, the influx of visitors to the promenade caused Federici to request additional soldiers from Angiviller and Lenoir. If the promenade were abandoned, there would not be a need for additional troops.

Isherwood also states that the location of the walkway on the outskirts of Paris kept it from being successful. This study argues for an opposite conclusion. The location of the walkway was crucial to its success. The Champs-Élysées allowed people to get away from the city without having to go to great lengths to do so. During the seventeenth century, before the completion of the additional bridges, it was difficult

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<sup>105</sup> Isherwood, 159

to travel throughout Paris; however, by 1777 the problem had been eliminated.

Isherwood makes it seem as if the promenade was farther away from Paris than it actually was. In addition, the increase in carriages and the use of hackney cabs made travel across the city much easier. Moreover, the availability of conveniences, such as cafes, allowed people to enjoy a rural setting without enduring hardship.

Most importantly, Isherwood claims that the prostitutes, beggars, and other criminal activity prevented any “honest man” from visiting the promenade. Furthermore, he states that after the Coliseum closed (1780), there was no real attempt to prevent crime in the promenade. This claim stands in direct opposition to the information presented in this work. As is the case in many parks, crime was a problem in the promenade, as the documents verify. The problem with Isherwood’s argument is his belief that little was done to remedy the problem. Angiviller knew beggars and criminals attempted to make the Champs-Élysées their home, and he realized the impact it had on the reputation of the walkway. While it would be false to state that Federici and his men were able to eliminate crime, it would be incorrect to claim that no effort was made in the endeavor. Not only did Angiviller place Federici in the walkway, but he also enlisted the aid of the Paris police to help patrol the area. As was the case with the *collège* students, Angiviller appealed to the king for intervention when needed. A large amount of energy was expended in the attempt to maintain the reputation of the Champs-Élysées. It is impossible to state that crime did not deter some people from frequenting the promenade, but it did not seem to hinder its popularity significantly during the late eighteenth century.

Isherwood claims that the nobility rejected the Champs-Élysées, the bourgeoisie felt awkward there, and the popular classes thought it was too aristocratic and remote.<sup>106</sup> While the interaction of the various social group was not always smooth, the Federici documents clearly illustrate that members of every social class visited the promenade. From the nobleman upset about the loss of his sword, to the members of the church who accompanied their students, to the bourgeois who sold their wares, to the farmer who worked the land, every class is represented. The Coliseum may have failed to successfully mix the various classes, but that alone is not enough to justify the idea that the Champs-Élysées as a whole failed to do so. The sporting events alone serve as evidence that all three estates regularly visited the promenade.

When examining the success Angiviller achieved, it must be broken down into separate goals. Did Angiviller manage to enact ordinances that helped to enhance the status of the Champs-Élysées as a successful park? If compared to the qualifications established by the Park Movement, then Angiviller did achieve a measure of success. First and foremost, the promenade existed on the periphery of the city. Secondly, Angiviller closely monitored the activities conducted within the space. Cafes were maintained in order to provide patrons with refreshments. Angiviller also designated a specific area for outdoor games where competitions were held, in which all classes participated. In addition, Angiviller worked diligently to maintain the gardens and greenery planted there. Overall, it is hard to dispute the success of the Champs-Élysées as a recreational space.

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<sup>106</sup> Isherwood, 160

Was Angiviller successful in maintaining the Champs-Élysées as a transitional space? During his tenure as Director of Buildings, Angiviller managed, for the most part, to halt the urbanization of the area. The ordinances handed down by the king and Angiviller established strict guidelines for developing in the walkway. He expressed on multiple occasions his fear of the Champs-Elysees becoming part of Paris and dissolving into the city. While in power he was able to accomplish this, but after the onset of the Revolution, he became desperate. Before his departure to Germany, Angiviller wrote several letters to prominent figures in Paris, such as LaFayette, begging them to adhere to the guidelines he had established. Based on the documents, it is safe to assume they did not. As previously stated, the commissioners in Paris began awarding permits to merchants and people looking to establish new businesses within the boundaries of the Champs-Élysées. The Revolution did not cause an immediate and complete change of the area away from a transitional space, but it seems apparent that it planted the seed of what was to come. Overall, Angiviller achieved short-term success in maintaining the promenade as a transitional space, but in the long run, the Champs-Elysees fell victim to “progress”.

The examination of a series of maps ranging in date from 1643 until 1890 helps to further establish the Champs-Elysees as a transitional space during the eighteenth century. In addition, the maps illustrate both dramatic changes that occurred after the Revolution, and Angiviller’s failure to achieve long-term success in halting urbanization.



Figure 10: *Septième plan de la ville de Paris, son accroissement et ses embellissemens sous Henry II et Louis XIII depuis 1589 jusqu'en 1643.* Jean-Baptiste Bourguignon d'Anville: 1705

Figure 9 is a map published in 1705 depicting Paris in 1643. The Champs-Elysees has been labeled to avoid confusion. The image shows that before Maria de Medici constructed the *Cours Le Reine*, the area existed as nothing more than fields used primarily for farming. The Tuileries remained the most sophisticated agricultural location west of Paris.

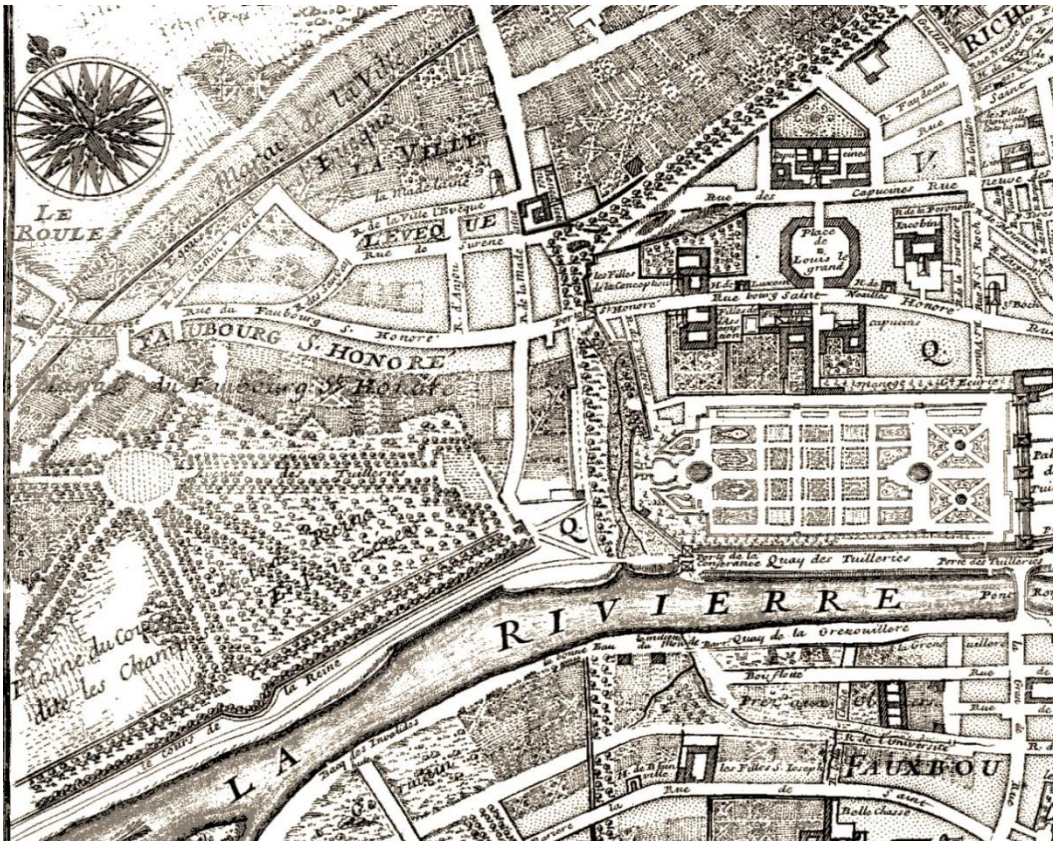


Figure 11: *Huitième plan de Paris divisé en ses vingt quartiers*. N. de Fer: 1705

It is apparent that by 1705 the Champs-Élysées had been dramatically altered. A large portion of the fields are gone. The avenue that would eventually become the Champs-Elysees is labeled *Avenue des Tuilleries*. Already the basic form of the transitional space can be seen. The walkways are tree lined, although the staggered rows had not yet been planted. The western most point still contains fields that were more than likely utilized for farming and grazing.



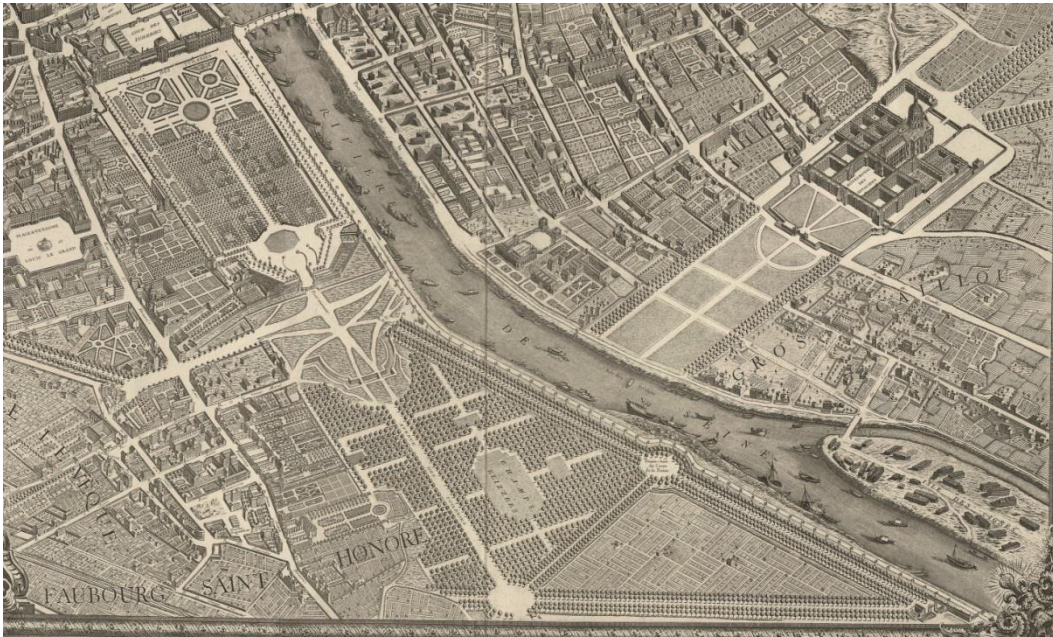


Figure 12: *Plan de Paris, 1736 dessiné et gravé sous les ordres de Messire Michel Étienne Turgot, Marquis de Sousmons: 1739*

As seen in Figure 11, in little more than thirty years, the promenade had undergone a great degree of change. The main boulevard extending from the Tuileries to the Etoile remains labeled the same; however, the name, Champs-Élysées, is now visibly displayed in the bottom center of the map, just right of the main avenue, and referring to the area, not the boulevard. The area located between the Etoile and the Tuileries has been altered to include meticulously planted rows of trees surrounding the individual walkways. The implications of the names are important because they indicate a contemporary perception of the transitional space. In later years the main promenade is referred to as the Champs-Élysées but during this time, it is obvious that the entire space is known as the Champs-Élysées, thus signifying the area as a park.



Figure 13: *Plans anciens de Paris*. Jaillot, 1775

Figure 12 is the best available representation of the Champs-Élysées during Federici's tenure. Not many dramatic changes separate this map from the one published in 1739. Two notable exceptions are the development of the Place Louis XV and the addition of the Coliseum. A few of the individual walkways have been eliminated, but the fields still remain at the western most point. The map clearly demonstrates the area as a transitional space between urban and rural. In addition, the map shows the magnitude of the space Federici and his three soldiers were forced to police.

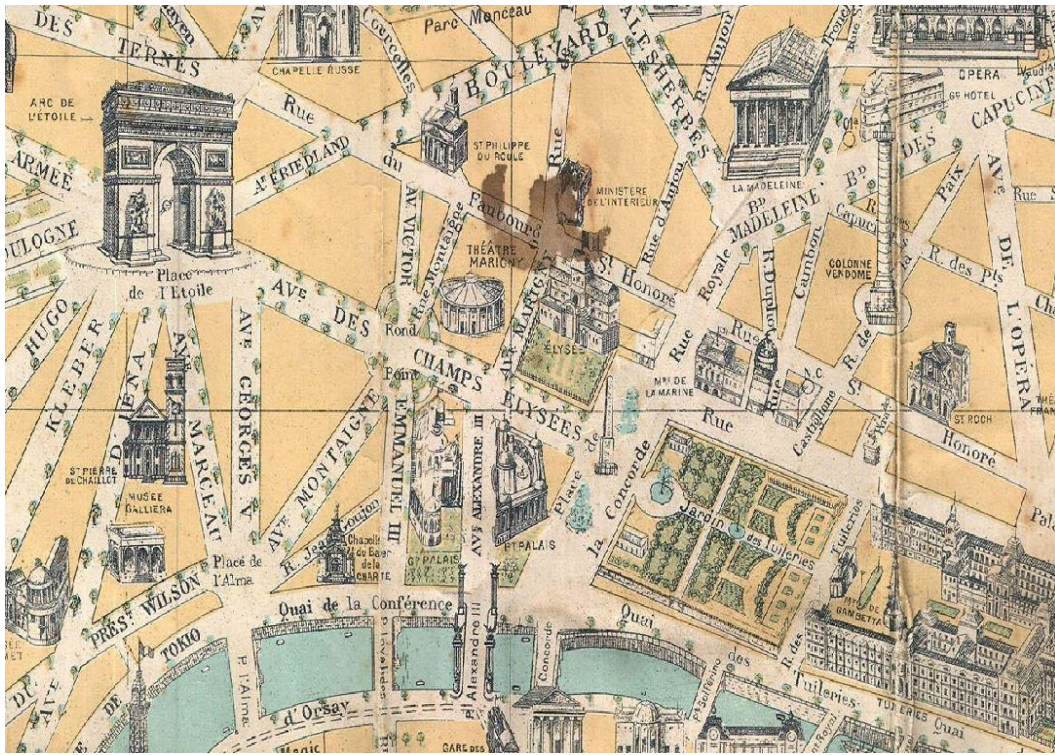


Figure 14: *Nouveau Plan de Paris Monumental*. L. Guilmin: 1890

The map dating from 1890 drastically differs from the previous ones. The most obvious alteration is the addition of the Arc de Triomphe. The individual walkways have been expanded and connected to form a system of roads. Several large buildings lay where the planted trees used to exist. The transition from city to rural is eliminated, and it is apparent the Champs-Élysées has been absorbed into Paris.

In conclusion, the Champs-Élysées during the eighteenth century served the function of a modern day park and Comte d'Angiviller strived to maintain it as such. Although Angiviller's vision of maintaining the area as a transitional space used for recreation was successful, his desire for it to remain so eventually failed. While the popularity of the promenade never faltered, the administration of the space changed

drastically after the onset of the Revolution. With Angiviller gone, merchants and businessmen scrambled to obtain the rights to develop the area. Angiviller's desperate pleas to the new city officials illustrate his recognition that his dream of upholding the area as a park might soon go unrealized. One is left to assume that he felt his efforts had been in vain, as he watched new businesses being constructed in the Champs-Élysées.

Unfortunately, the Revolution destroyed numerous landmarks in the name of progress. The Champs-Élysées, as it existed in 1789, represented the Ancien Regime. The statue of Louis XV came to be viewed as a symbol of Bourbon excess and tyranny and was eventually torn down. As previously stated, a guillotine was erected in the Place Louis XV, and the name was changed to the Place de la Concord. The documents illustrate the new administration's indifference toward the promenade as a transitional space. It appears as if it viewed the land as an opportunity to expand Paris and create new sources of revenue. As the maps illustrate, the Champs-Élysées lost its status as a transitional space in less than a hundred years: the majority of the trees were gone and in their place stood streets and buildings.

Although Angiviller was not successful in ensuring that the Champs-Élysées remained a park, his efforts deserve recognition, as his attempts predated the park movement by nearly sixty years. Today, Angiviller receives acknowledgement as a patron of the arts who contributed to the creation of the Louvre; however, his work in the Champs-Élysées is largely ignored. Perhaps that is due in part to the fact that the Champs-Elysees is usually viewed from a modern perspective and has not been

recognized as once having been a park. Or perhaps it is because the excesses of the Revolution tainted the history of the area. Either way, Angiviller possessed a passion for the Champs-Élysées that spurred him to create a set of ordinances and guidelines ahead of his time. The Revolutionary government viewed the project as extravagant, but starting in 1830 government officials around the world would share Angiviller's dream of creating parks that would provide entertainment and fresh air to their citizens.

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### Biographical Information

Staci Swiney obtained her BS with a major in History from Texas Wesleyan University in 2004. Her research interests are eighteenth century French cultural history and the Regency Era. Her future plans include obtaining a PhD and teaching history in a university setting. Her hope is to one day publish historical fictions.