



Theodore Gericault: The Hotel de Longueville and the Galeries du Louvre, 1792-1808

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Théodore Géricault:

The Hôtel de Longueville and the Galeries du Louvre, 1792-1808

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A Thesis in the Field of History

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Abstract

My thesis examines the early life of Théodore Géricault from 1792 to 1808. We have learned a great deal about this important French painter in recent years. We know much less about Géricault's childhood, his family relationships in Paris, and his interests as a child.

My thesis focuses on the spaces in Paris that Géricault shared with others during his youth, especially those around the Hôtel de Longueville, the site of the Robillard tobacco business, and the nearby Galeries du Louvre. I also examine Géricault's relationships with the Saint-Domingue Robillards and with the Vernet family, most notably with Charles Horace Vernet (Carle Vernet), Géricault's first teacher, who resided in the Galeries du Louvre from 1862 to 1806.

Charles Clément reported that Géricault began painting in the studio of Carle Vernet in 1808. Géricault's father wanted Théodore to join him at the Robillard tobacco firm. We know today, however, that Clément constructed a highly incomplete account of Géricault's private life, an account that avoids any mention of details that might have reflected badly on Géricault and those close to him.

My thesis explores a different set of historical sources that shed new light on Géricault and his development. I introduce individuals from the Robillard family who can be connected to Géricault during his formative years, individuals that Charles Clément and other critics chose to ignore. I then proceed to make some educated guesses about how these relationships may have affected Géricault and influenced his art.

Acknowledgments

My research into Géricault's early life produced a portrait of Géricault and his family that differs in several important ways from other studies of the painter produced by talented and capable scholars. The scholarship of Lorenz Eitner, Henri Zerner, Régis Michel, Linda Nochlin, and others too numerous to name, provided the foundation upon which my own arguments are built.

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Frank and Ethel Harper provided unstinting support. My parents Robert and Margaret Harper taught me to question the world and my own assumptions. I owe my wife and my children an immense debt and thank them for their love, their patience, and for helping keep my priorities correct.

All translations are my own unless otherwise cited. All errors or omissions are my fault alone.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	iv
List of figures.....	vi
I. Introduction.....	1
II. Standard Accounts: Théodore Géricault.....	6
III. Hôtel de Longueville and the Robillard Partners.....	19
IV. Hôtel de Longueville and the Galeries du Louvre.....	26
V. Hôtel de Longueville, the Galeries du Louvre, and the Terror.....	37
VI. The Saint-Domingue Robillards.....	50
VII. Paul de Barras, the Robillards, and the Galeries du Louvre.....	57
VIII. Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville and the <i>Musée Français</i>	67
IX. Conclusion: Robillard Family Matters.....	77
Works Cited.....	97

List of Figures

Fig. 1	Hôtel de Chevreuse, 1650.....	36
Fig. 2	Amédée-Selim Robillard, 1797-98.....	86
Fig. 3	Pierre Robillard, 1797-98.....	87

Chapter I

Introduction

Charles Clément reported that Géricault began painting in the studio of Carle Vernet, in 1808, at the age of seventeen.¹ The French artistic establishment largely ignored Géricault's artistic efforts until 1819, when Géricault presented *Le Radeau de la Méduse* (*The Raft of the Medusa*) at the Paris Salon.²

After his death, in 1824, Géricault's stature grew. In 1862, Ernest Chesneau asserted that without Géricault and *Le Radeau de la Méduse* French Romanticism would never have occurred.³ Today Géricault is considered one of the most important artists in French history and his paintings hang in the Louvre as national treasures.

The problems facing Géricault scholars are well known. Théodore Géricault did not keep a journal and just forty-seven pieces of Géricault's correspondence survive.⁴ The primary sources and all known Géricault correspondence and interviews have been

¹ Charles Clément, *Géricault: Étude Biographique et Critique avec le Catalogue Raisonné de l'Œuvre du Maître* (Paris: Didier, 1879), 19-20.

² Germain Bazin, *Théodore Géricault: Étude Critique, Documents et Catalogue Raisonné*, I-IV (Paris: La Bibliothèque des Arts, 1987-1990); Germain Bazin, *Théodore Géricault: Étude Critique, Documents et Catalogue Raisonné*, V (Paris: Wildenstein Institute - La Bibliothèque des Arts, 1992); and Germain Bazin, *Théodore Géricault: Étude Critique, Documents et Catalogue Raisonné*, documentation Elizabeth Raffy VI-VII (Paris: Wildenstein Institute - La Bibliothèque des Arts, 1994-1997), 1: 41.

³ Ernest Chesneau, *La Peinture Française au XIX Siècle* (Paris: Didier et C^{ie}, 1862), xvi.

⁴ Bruno Chenique, "Les Cercles Politiques de Géricault (1791-1824)," (PhD diss., Université de Paris I-Panthéon-Sorbonne, 1998), 473.

identified in two modern works: Germain Bazin's: *Théodore Géricault: Étude Critique, Documents et Catalogue Raisonné*, the seven-volume study of Géricault begun in 1987 and completed a decade later after Bazin's death;⁵ and *Géricault*, the 1991 exhibition catalogue for the Géricault bicentenary, compiled by Sylvaine Laveissière and Régis Michel with assistance from Bruno Chenique.⁶ Chenique's 1998 doctoral thesis "Les Cercles Politiques de Géricault (1791-1824)" provides invaluable commentary and includes a thorough annotated bibliography of primary and secondary sources.⁷

In 1972, Michel Le Pesant produced proof confirming that Alexandrine-Modeste Caruel, the wife of Jean-Baptiste Caruel, Géricault's maternal uncle, maintained an illicit relationship with the painter and was the mother of Géricault's only known child.⁸ Le Pesant also documented the history of mental health problems in the Caruel family, problems that nineteenth-century Géricault scholars and sources minimized or denied.⁹ Le Pesant presented scholars with clear evidence that Clément and Géricault's other nineteenth-century biographers had created a biography of the painter sanitized of details of Géricault's personal life that these critics deemed too unsavory for the public eye.

Hints of Géricault's personal problems surfaced briefly several decades after his death. In 1851, Gustave Planche published an essay in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* in

⁵ Bazin, *Géricault*.

⁶ Sylvaine Laveissière and Régis Michel ed., *Géricault* (Paris: Editions de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1991), 261-324.

⁷ Chenique, "Les Cercles Politiques de Géricault (1791-1824)."

⁸ Lorenz Eitner, *Géricault's Raft of the Medusa* (London: Phaidon, 1972), 12-13.

⁹ Michel Le Pesant, "Documents Inédits sur Géricault," *Revue de l'Art* 31 (1976): 73-80.

which Planche reported that Géricault attempted suicide on several occasions.¹⁰ Planche based his claims on the letters of Nicolas-Toussaint Charlet, Géricault's friend and associate who had recently died.¹¹

In 1851, Joseph Félix Leblanc de la Combe was about to publish a biography of Charlet and was probably pleased with the publicity.¹² La Combe published excerpts of *Charlet, Sa Vie, Ses Lettres* in the *Revue Contemporaine* several years later and included the account of Géricault's purported suicide attempts, probably to build sales.¹³ Gustave Planche published his own book, entitled *Portraits des Artistes: Peintres et Sculpteurs*, in 1853, and included the Charlet claims about Géricault's mental health.¹⁴ More editions of La Combe's *Charlet, Sa Vie, Ses Lettres* appeared before the public up to 1856.¹⁵

The Planche and La Combe accounts appeared in the aftermath of the turmoil that placed Napoléon III on the French throne. During the decade that preceded this coup, a number of France's leading historians and critics, such as Charles Blanc and Jules

¹⁰ Gustave Planche, "Peintres et Sculptures Moderne de la France: Géricault," *Revue de Deux Mondes* X (June, 1851): 502-531.

¹¹ Planche, *Revue de Deux Mondes* X (June, 1851): 524.

¹² Joseph Félix Leblanc de La Combe, *Charlet: Sa Vie, Ses Lettres, Suivi d'une Description Raisonnée de son Œuvre Lithographie* (Paris: Paulin et Le Chevalier, 1851).

¹³ Joseph Félix Leblanc de La Combe, "Charlet: Sa Vie, Ses Lettres et Ses Œuvres," *Revue Contemporaine* 11 (31 January, 1854): 502.

¹⁴ Gustave Planche, *Portraits d'Artistes: Peintres et Sculpteurs* (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1853), I: 345.

¹⁵ Joseph Félix Leblanc de La Combe, *Charlet: Sa Vie, Ses Lettres* (Paris: Paulin et Le Chevalier, 1856).

Michelet, canonized Géricault as a republican visionary and saint.¹⁶ The Charlet letters presented Géricault as a mentally and emotionally unstable young man, a depiction that called into question the hagiographies of Blanc, Michelet, and other republican scholars. It is against this backdrop of political conflict, public personas, and private reputations impugned that Charles Clément prepared his account of Géricault's life and works.

Charles Clément published his first catalogue of Géricault's work in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* in 1866.¹⁷ Clément met many of Géricault's surviving friends and former students while completing this project. The surviving members of Géricault's circle evidently decided that the most effective way to refute Charlet would be to construct a detailed biography of their own. Clément was the ideal choice. The project would produce a definitive study of Géricault, discredit Charlet, and seal off further inquiry.

Clément's landmark biography of Géricault first appeared in three installments in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* in the spring of 1867.¹⁸ Clément followed these essays with two articles on Géricault's paintings and drawings published in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* in September and October of 1867.¹⁹

¹⁶ Régis Michel, *Géricault, Invention du Réel* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), 91, 140-143.

¹⁷ Charles Clément, "Catalogue de l'Œuvre de Géricault," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 20 (Jan-June, 1866): 521-541.

¹⁸ Charles Clément, "Géricault," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 22 (Jan-June, 1867): 209-249, 321-349, 449-483.

¹⁹ Charles Clément, "Géricault," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 23 (July-December, 1867): 272-293, 351-372.

Clément worked hard to keep the facts from historians such as Henry Houssaye. On June 6, 1879, Clément wrote Houssaye to confirm that Géricault had been deeply involved with a married woman and that this affair had caused Géricault an immense amount of grief throughout his short life, just as Houssaye suspected.²⁰ However, Clément refused to reveal the identity of Géricault's mysterious lover. He allowed only that this woman had been part of one of the richest and most influential families of the First Empire, and that Géricault's closest friends had confirmed the facts of the affair.²¹

We now know that Clément met Alexandrine-Modeste Caruel and built a protective wall around Géricault. We do not know what other facts Clément and his confederates may have intentionally or unintentionally obscured behind this wall.

My thesis attempts to answer these and other questions. I situate Géricault in Paris as part of a specific community located around the Hôtel de Longueville during the years 1792 to 1808. I examine new sources and introduce new members of the extended Géricault family who, I contend, played major roles in Géricault's development.

The following chapter is a brief biographical examination of Géricault's life from his birth in Rouen, in 1791, up to the Salon of 1812 in Paris. This summary draws upon the work of Géricault scholars and researchers over the last two centuries and serves to summarize modern scholarly opinion on Géricault's formative years and early career.

²⁰ Laveissière and Michel, *Géricault*, 318-319.

²¹ Laveissière and Michel, *Géricault*, 318-319.

Chapter II

Standard Accounts

Jean-Louis-André-Théodore Géricault was born in Rouen on September 26, 1791, and lived most of his life in Paris, where he died on January 24, 1824, from injuries stemming from a combination of spinal tuberculosis, riding accidents, and poor medical advice.²² During the first four years of his life, Théodore Géricault lived with his parents Georges-Nicolas Géricault and Louise-Marie-Jeanne Géricault in the home of Théodore's maternal grandmother, Louise-Thérèse Caruel, at number 7 rue d'Avalasse, Rouen.²³

Georges-Nicolas Géricault was born in Saint-Cyr-du-Bailleul on February 23, 1743, in western Normandy and studied law in Caen.²⁴ After completing his studies, Georges-Nicolas Géricault moved to Rouen to work for Rouen's royal prosecutor Jean-Vincent-Charles Caruel.²⁵

In Caen, Georges-Nicolas studied law with Jean-Baptiste Caruel, the second son of Jean-Vincent-Charles, a fact that very likely played a part in securing the position in Rouen.²⁶

²² Le Pesant, "Documents Inédits sur Géricault," 80.

²³ Bazin, *Géricault*, 1: 23.

²⁴ Jean Sagne, *Géricault* (Paris: Fayard, 1991), 10.

²⁵ Sagne, *Géricault*, 10.

²⁶ Le Pesant, "Documents Inédits sur Géricault," 80.

Théodore Géricault's mother, Louise Marie-Jeanne Caruel, was the daughter of Jean-Vincent-Charles Caruel and Louise-Thérèse de Poix, who married on April 8, 1750, and had five children together: three daughters and two sons.²⁷ Louise-Thérèse de Poix was the daughter of Jean-Baptiste-Phillipe de Poix, a successful tobacco manufacturer in Dieppe.²⁸ Her younger sister and only other sibling, Marie-Thérèse de Poix, married an enterprising businessman named Pierre-Antoine Robillard on January 29, 1758.²⁹

In 1773, Jean-Vincent-Charles Caruel was forcibly confined to a mental hospital run by priests in Pontorson after suffering a violent breakdown and remained there until his death in 1779.³⁰ Several years earlier, in 1770, Jean-Vincent-Charles Caruel tried unsuccessfully to have his own eldest son, François-Jean-Louis, committed to a mental institution.³¹

On February 16, 1790, Georges-Nicolas Géricault married Louise-Marie-Jeanne Caruel, moved into the Caruel home on the rue d'Avalasse, and began a new career in the field of maritime commerce.³² Georges-Nicolas Géricault was forty-seven years of age and Louise-Marie-Jeanne Caruel was thirty-eight at the time of their marriage.³³

²⁷ Le Pesant, "Documents Inédits sur Géricault," 80.

²⁸ Bazin, *Géricault*, 1: 23.

²⁹ Le Pesant, "Documents Inédits sur Géricault," 80.

³⁰ Le Pesant, "Documents Inédits sur Géricault," 73.

³¹ Le Pesant, "Documents Inédits sur Géricault," 80.

³² Sagne, *Géricault*, 10-11.

³³ Bazin, *Géricault*, 1: 23.

Théodore was born the following year. We possess a letter dated October 19, 1791, from Georges-Nicholas Géricault to a cousin in which George-Nicolas announces the birth of Théodore and describes the joys and trials of fatherhood.³⁴

Late in 1795 or early in 1796, Georges-Nicolas moved to Paris with Théodore, Louise-Marie-Jeanne, and Louise-Thérèse Caruel to work as treasurer in the Robillard-Caruel tobacco business. The exact date is unclear.³⁵

The Assembly in Paris voted to end the royal monopoly on the manufacture and sale of tobacco in March of 1791.³⁶ Jean-Baptiste Caruel had been living in Paris since 1790, at least, where he worked for an unknown period of time as a lawyer for the parliament of Paris.³⁷ In 1792, Pierre-Antoine Robillard formed *Robillard, oncle et neveu* with two nephews, Jean-Baptiste Caruel and Jacques-Florent Robillard, to profit from the newly liberalized tobacco market; and based the company in the Hôtel de Longueville.³⁸

In Paris, Georges-Nicolas Géricault and his family stayed with Pierre-Antoine and Marie-Thérèse Robillard on the rue de Belle Chasse and then moved into an apartment nearby at 96 rue de l'Université.³⁹ The de Poix sisters lived steps from one another and could visit easily. The neighborhood in the Faubourg Saint-Germain was still one of the

³⁴ Bazin, *Géricault*, 1: 24.

³⁵ Bazin, *Géricault*, 1: 23.

³⁶ Romuald Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents et Censeurs de la Banque de France Nomes Sous le Consulat et L'Empire* (Geneva: Droz, 1974), 347.

³⁷ Bazin, *Géricault*, 1: 23.

³⁸ Bazin, *Géricault*, 1: 23-24.

³⁹ Sagne, *Géricault*, 22.

most prestigious in Paris, near the Seine. The Hôtel de Longueville was a short walk from the homes of Georges-Nicolas Géricault and Pierre-Antoine Robillard.⁴⁰

The Robillard and Géricault families lived a comfortable existence together in the same part of the Faubourg Saint-Germain until Marie-Thérèse Robillard died in Paris on May 29, 1798.⁴¹ Marie-Thérèse Robillard had no children and left her entire fortune to her sister Louise-Thérèse Caruel. Pierre-Antoine Robillard contested the will and after a protracted court battle eventually won control of his wife's estate on the condition that he pay Louise-Thérèse Caruel 150,000 livres in compensation.⁴² Pierre-Antoine Robillard died a wealthy man on June 27, 1802, in his new home in the Place Vendôme.⁴³

As a boy, Théodore often visited the Franconi Brothers circus, located on the rue Neuve-Saint-Augustin from 1801 to 1806, and then on the rue du Mont-Thabor, not far from the family tobacco business situated in the Hôtel Longueville.⁴⁴ Dedreux Dorcy, one of our principal sources, told critic Charles Blanc that Géricault loved the horses and martial depictions of Napoléon's battles at the Franconi circus.⁴⁵ According to Dorcy, the "Mecklenbourgeois," or aristocracy of Paris, so fascinated young Théodore that he often

⁴⁰ Le Pesant, "Documents Inédits sur Géricault," 74.

⁴¹ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 342.

⁴² Bazin, *Géricault*, 1: 23-24.

⁴³ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 342.

⁴⁴ Sagne, *Géricault*, 36.

⁴⁵ Charles Blanc, *Histoire des Peintres Français Au Dix-Neuvième Siècle* (Paris: Cauville Frères, 1845), 1: 407.

waited near the entrances of Paris's stately homes hoping to catch a glimpse of a duke or duchess.⁴⁶

Géricault studied at the pension Dubois-Loiseau for a time.⁴⁷ Again, the dates are not clear. In 1806, Théodore enrolled in the prestigious Lycée Impérial. At this elite institution Géricault mixed with children from the most important families of Napoléon's First Empire. As a youth, his teachers included René Richard Castel, the noted botanist, and Pierre Bouillon, the Prix de Rome winning engraver.⁴⁸ Théodore was evidently an indifferent student who enjoyed cake and parties more than studying.⁴⁹ However, during one visit to the Franconi circus around this time, Théodore astonished the adults present by speaking fluent *caraiibe* (Creole) to a "prince" from the exotic French Antilles.⁵⁰

Géricault could draw and copy with remarkable skill at a very early age. Théodore Lebrun knew Théodore at the Lycée Impérial, although the two were in different classes.⁵¹ According to Lebrun, Géricault amazed his fellow students with his extraordinary artistic abilities, skills Géricault possessed before the boys began studying

⁴⁶ Blanc, *Histoire des Peintres Français*, 1: 407.

⁴⁷ Clément, *Géricault: Étude Biographique et Critique*, 15.

⁴⁸ Laveissière and Michel, *Géricault*, 263.

⁴⁹ Bazin, *Géricault*, 1: 24.

⁵⁰ Laveissière and Michel, *Géricault*, 263.

⁵¹ Laveissière and Michel, *Géricault*, 263

with their teacher Bouillon at the Lycée.⁵² Régis Michel is one of the few critics to question this notion of Géricault's "spontaneous genius."⁵³

In 1845, Charles Blanc explained Géricault's reputed lack of scholarly ability by stating that Géricault's immense desire to paint combined with his restless spirit made academic success and any other career impossible.⁵⁴ Charles Clément described Théodore Géricault as a young man essentially consumed by two passions: painting and horses.⁵⁵ In 1841, an anonymous biographer wrote that Théodore, as a youth, so desperately wanted to develop the arched legs of a cavalier that he constructed an iron machine of his own design to achieve his goal.⁵⁶ Régis Michel suggests that Géricault's efforts to acquire the legs of a professional rider might be a sign of some sort of latent masochism.⁵⁷

Géricault scholars interested in exploring Théodore's extended family have traditionally focused on Théodore's summer visits to Mortain and Manche.⁵⁸ As a youth, Théodore often traveled to Mortain during the summer to stay with his uncles Siméon

⁵² Laveissière and Michel, *Géricault*, 263.

⁵³ Michel, *Géricault, Invention du Réel*, 15.

⁵⁴ Blanc, *Histoire des Peintres Français*, 1: 407.

⁵⁵ Clément, *Géricault: Étude Biographique et Critique*, 16-20.

⁵⁶ "Salon de 1841-Sculpture: Tombeau de Géricault, Par M. Étex." *Magasin Pittoresque* 9 (Paris: Aux Bureaux d'Abonnement et de Vente, 1841): 108-110.

⁵⁷ Michel, *Géricault, Invention du Réel*, 16.

⁵⁸ Lorenz Eitner, *Géricault, Sa vie, son Œuvre*, trans. Jeanne Bouniort (Paris: Gallimard, 1991), 16-17.

Bonnesœur-Bourginière and Julien Clouard and their families.⁵⁹ Clouard and Bonnesœur-Bourginière were both lawyers who knew Jean-Baptiste Caruel. In 1783, Julian Clouard married Marie-Jeanne-Philippine-Cécile Caruel.⁶⁰ Siméon Bonnesœur-Bourginière married Félix-Louise Caruel in 1787.⁶¹ Siméon Bonnesœur-Bourginière also served as the representative for Manche during the early days of the Revolution. In 1792, Bonnesœur-Bourginière voted for the death of Louis XVI and was, thus, considered a régicide.⁶² Jean Sagne argues that Théodore likely saw Bonnesœur-Bourginière as a more dynamic and interesting figure than his father Georges-Nicolas Géricault.⁶³

Théodore lost his mother on March 15, 1808, but inherited a substantial fortune from her estate.⁶⁴ Shortly after, Théodore evidently decided to abandon his studies at the Lycée Impérial. Théodore left school in April, 1808, spent that summer with his uncles in Mortain, and returned to Paris that September, ostensibly to begin work with his father and uncles in Paris at *Robillard, oncle et neveu*.⁶⁵ Georges-Nicolas and Théodore left the rue de l'Université residence to Louise-Thérèse Caruel sometime in the fall or early winter of 1808 and moved into an apartment owned by Charles Biancour, one of the

⁵⁹ Clément, *Géricault: Étude Biographique et Critique*, 17.

⁶⁰ Le Pesant, "Documents Inédits sur Géricault," 80.

⁶¹ Le Pesant, "Documents Inédits sur Géricault," 80.

⁶² Bazin, *Géricault*, 1: 27.

⁶³ Sagne, *Géricault*, 17.

⁶⁴ Bazin, *Géricault*, 27.

⁶⁵ Chenique, "Les Cercles Politiques de Géricault (1791-1824)," 22.

Robillard partners, at 8 Rue de la Michodière, close to the new base of *Robillard, oncle et neveu* on the rue Grange Batelière.⁶⁶

According to Clément, Théodore was unenthusiastic about joining his father and uncles at *Robillard, oncle et neveu* after leaving the Lycée in 1808.⁶⁷ Nineteenth-century critics treated Georges-Nicolas Géricault as an unenlightened boor. In 1842, Louis Batissier described Georges-Nicolas Géricault as “a hen that gave birth to an eagle.”⁶⁸ Charles Clément credited Jean-Baptiste Caruel, Théodore’s uncle, as the aspiring painter’s principal family patron and reported that Caruel allowed his nephew to slip away from work to study painting in Vernet’s studio rather than learn the family trade.⁶⁹

Despite knowing that Charles Clément wrote a highly inaccurate account of Géricault’s life to conceal Théodore Géricault’s affair with Alexandrine-Modeste Caruel, the wife of Jean-Baptiste Caruel, and the history of mental illness in the Caruel family, this characterization of Jean-Baptiste Caruel as Géricault’s family patron has taken deep root in modern Géricault scholarship.

Lorenz Eitner, the Géricault scholar who first made the Le Pesant discovery of the affair between Géricault and Alexandrine-Modeste Caruel public in 1972, nonetheless continued to press the case that Jean-Baptiste Caruel played a key role in Théodore

⁶⁶ Le Pesant, “Documents Inédits sur Géricault,” 74.

⁶⁷ Clément, *Géricault: Étude Biographique et Critique*, 19-20.

⁶⁸ Louis Batissier, “Biographie de Géricault” *La Revue du XIX^e siècle* (Paris: 1842), in *Géricault: Raconté par Lui-Même et par Ses Amis*, ed. Pierre Courthion and Pierre Cailler (Geneva: Courthion, 1947), 32.

⁶⁹ Clément, *Géricault: Étude Biographique et Critique*, 19-20.

Géricault's decision to become a painter.⁷⁰ Modern critics looking to explain Géricault's decision to embark on a career in art largely accept Clément's claim that Jean-Baptiste Caruel acted as Théodore's benefactor. Eitner noted that Jean-Baptiste Caruel kept a large library and collected art; and claimed that Géricault's frequent visits to the Caruel home stimulated his desire to pursue a career in art.⁷¹ In 1991, Jean Sagne made the same argument, asserting that Jean-Baptiste and Alexandrine's interest in art and culture likely played a key part in Géricault's decision to become a painter.⁷²

As noted, the *Le Pesant* discovery did not undermine the characterization of Jean-Baptiste Caruel as Théodore Géricault's principal family protector, a characterization advanced by virtually all nineteenth-century sources and cemented by Clément in 1868. Rather, modern critics simply changed the Clément narrative to accommodate the discovery that Alexandrine-Modeste and Théodore carried on an intense affair for several years and produced a child together. Jonathon Miles, for example, grafts *Le Pesant* onto Clément to argue that Théodore had a strong need for a feminine presence after the death of his mother in 1808, and pursued a career in art to win the approval of Alexandrine-Modeste Caruel, which in turn led to their romance.⁷³

Modern Géricault scholars agree with their nineteenth-century counterparts that Théodore first began studying painting with Carle Vernet after he left the Lycée

⁷⁰ Lorenz Eitner, *Géricault's Raft of the Medusa* (London: Phaidon, 1972), 12-13.

⁷¹ Eitner, *Géricault, Sa vie, son Œuvre*, 16-17.

⁷² Sagne, *Géricault*, 41.

⁷³ Jonathon Miles, *The Wreck of the Medusa* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2007), 15-18.

Impérial.⁷⁴ Carle Vernet was a noted painter of horses and battle scenes and a highly respected artist in Paris. Germain Bazin points to Géricault's *carte de travail pour le Cabinet des estampes de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, dated February 20, 1810, which identified Théodore as a student of Carle Vernet.⁷⁵ As a student of Vernet, Théodore Géricault was entitled to enter the Musée Napoléon to paint and copy the museum artworks.⁷⁶

Régis Michel, one of the most perceptive modern scholars, supports the nineteenth-century argument that Géricault chose to study with Vernet because of Vernet's particular ability to paint horses, but points out that Carle Vernet did not accept students.⁷⁷ Carle Vernet belonged to a family of painters who passed on their art from generation to generation. Why, then, did Vernet decide to accept Géricault as a student? Carle learned to paint from his father Joseph Vernet and, in turn, taught his own son, Horace Vernet, to paint.⁷⁸ Vernet's reputation as a painter of equestrian scenes explains Géricault's interest in Vernet, but does not explain clearly why Vernet decided to teach Géricault to paint, or shed any light on when or how Vernet and Géricault first met.

Reading Michel, we get the sense that the critic finds the question troubling. However, we possess very little of Géricault's work that we can date to this period and

⁷⁴ Chenique, "Les Cercles Politiques de Géricault (1791-1824)," 22.

⁷⁵ Bazin, *Géricault*, 1: 29.

⁷⁶ Bazin, *Géricault*, 1: 29.

⁷⁷ Michel, *Géricault, Invention du Réel*, 20-21.

⁷⁸ Eugène de Mirecourt, *Horace Vernet* (Paris, Roret, 1855), 14-17.

Michel does not dwell on Vernet's patronage of Géricault at any great length. Instead, Michel sets the problem aside by stating that Pierre Guérin, "authoritarian and dogmatic," was Géricault's true teacher, not Vernet.⁷⁹

Bruno Chenique, who clearly benefited from his experiences working with both Michel and Harvard art historian Henri Zerner, provides a more detailed and concrete response to the same question. Chenique suggests that Vernet may have agreed to train Géricault because Carle Vernet and Caruel belonged to the same Masonic lodge in Paris.⁸⁰ Chenique's explanation makes some sense but relies almost entirely on Clément's characterization of Caruel as Théodore's patron. Jean Sagne embraces the consensus view of Caruel acting to advance Géricault's artistic career but offers the intriguing suggestion that Théodore first encountered Vernet via the Franconi circus, where he might have seen an engraving Vernet produced of the young wife of Laurent Franconi.⁸¹

On May 9, 1807, Jean-Baptiste Caruel married Alexandrine-Modeste de Sainte-Martin in Paris and on June 18, 1808, Alexandrine-Modeste gave birth to their first child, Louis-Sylvestre Caruel.⁸² The following year, on December 8, 1809, Alexandrine-

⁷⁹ Michel, *Géricault, Invention du Réel*, 20.

⁸⁰ Chenique, "Les Cercles Politiques de Géricault (1791-1824)," 57.

⁸¹ Sagne, *Géricault*, 37.

⁸² Bazin, *Géricault*, 1: 27.

Modeste gave birth to another boy, Paul Caruel, and Jean-Baptiste and Alexandrine-Modeste asked Théodore to act as godfather to their second child.⁸³

Géricault moved to the studio of Pierre Guérin sometime in 1810 or 1811, according to Bazin.⁸⁴ In 1811, Napoléon needed troops and Théodore received his conscription notice. The Géricault family was wealthy enough to arrange for a replacement to serve in Théodore's stead.⁸⁵

The death of Géricault's maternal grandmother, Louise-Thérèse Caruel, on April 10, 1812, provided Théodore with a second fortune.⁸⁶ That same year, Théodore was involved in the second of two altercations at the Musée Napoléon and his visiting privileges at the museum were suspended in late May of 1812.⁸⁷

The family deaths and temporary suspension, however, did not keep Géricault from presenting his first major painting, *Portrait équestre de M. D****, at the age of twenty-one at the Salon of 1812.⁸⁸ The *Portrait équestre de M. D**** received several favorable notices from critics and the attention of Jacques-Louis David, who famously

⁸³ Bazin, *Géricault*, 1: 29.

⁸⁴ Chenique, "Les Cercles Politiques de Géricault (1791-1824)," 23.

⁸⁵ Laveissière and Michel, *Géricault*, 267.

⁸⁶ Le Pesant, "Documents Inédits sur Géricault," 80.

⁸⁷ Laveissière and Michel, *Géricault*, 268.

⁸⁸ Bazin, *Géricault*, 1: 27.

remarked: “D’où cela sort-il? Je ne connais pas cette touche-là,” or “Where did this come from? I don’t recognize the touch.”⁸⁹

The government did not purchase the *Portrait équestre de M. D****, the painting we know today as the *Charging Chasseur*, when the Salon closed in February 1813.⁹⁰ Géricault did receive a gold medal for the work, however, and won the attention of the most important authority on art in France.⁹¹

We need only note at this point in the current inquiry that Géricault painted and sketched for another dozen years until his death in 1824.⁹²

Jean-Baptiste Caruel may well have played the part of Théodore Géricault’s principal family benefactor assigned him by Clément and others. The fact that Dedreux-Dorcy, Géricault’s surviving associates, and Charles Clément constructed a fiction to conceal the relationship between Géricault and Alexandrine-Modeste Caruel forces us to scrutinize all aspects of a family history that depicts the cuckold husband as the hero.

The claims about the generosity of spirit of Jean-Baptiste Caruel may indeed be true. However, we need to examine other sources to determine whether other members of the Robillard-Caruel-Géricault family circle might also have influenced Théodore Géricault’s development as a painter and as a man.

⁸⁹ Bazin, *Géricault*, 1: 31.

⁹⁰ Laveissière and Michel, *Géricault*, 269.

⁹¹ Bazin, *Géricault*, 1: 31.

⁹² Sagne, *Géricault*, 271-280.

Chapter III

Hôtel de Longueville and the Robillard Partners

A central assumption of this thesis is that the Hôtel de Longueville played a key role in Géricault's development after the family arrived in Paris in 1795 or 1796. At that time, the Hôtel de Longueville was one of the most famous buildings in France, occupying a long rectangle of real estate between the rue St. Thomas du Louvre and the rue Saint-Nicaise close to the Tuileries palace in the center of Paris. Théodore Géricault spent the first four or five years of his life on the rue d'Avalasse in provincial Rouen. The change in surroundings from Rouen to Paris could hardly have been more dramatic.

I will explore the Géricault-Robillard family connections with the Hôtel de Longueville later in this thesis. First, however, I will examine the Robillard firm's business connections with the Hôtel de Longueville from 1792 and detail how the partners built the Robillard brand around this historic building.

On September 15, 1791, the Convention valued the Hôtel de Longueville at 900,000 francs and leased the buildings to "citoyen Détailleur" for a period of nine years for 46,000 francs per year.⁹³ Before 1800, the tobacco firm *Robillard, oncle et neveux*, had been tenants of Détailleur. However, on May 25, 1800, *Robillard oncle, neveux et Compagnie* obtained a lease of six or nine years for the Hôtel de Longueville and of "all

⁹³ *Sommier des Biens Nationaux de la Ville de Paris: Conservé aux Archives de la Seine* (Paris: L. Cerf, 1920), 1: 48.

the state-owned machinery therein, for the manufacture and sale of tobacco” for an annual fee of 80,000 francs.⁹⁴

Robillard oncle, neveux et Compagnie remained in the Hôtel de Longueville for just six more years, however. On February 26, 1806, Napoléon Bonaparte issued a decree ordering *le sieur Robillard* and his firm to vacate the Hôtel de Longueville within six months, by July 1, 1806.⁹⁵ The Robillard partners could not ignore Napoléon’s command and purchased three properties on the boulevard Montmartre and the rue Grange-Batelière, including the Hôtel d’Augny and the old barracks of the Swiss Guards, to serve as their new base of operations in 1806 and 1807.⁹⁶

Romuald Szramkiewicz published his history of the Bank of France under the Consulate and the First Empire in 1974. This work is essential to any study of Géricault and the Robillards. In 1791, Pierre-Antoine Robillard won the right to manufacture and sell tobacco at the Hôtel de Longueville, according to Szramkiewicz.⁹⁷

In 1795, Pierre Robillard formed the first society with his nephews, Jean-Baptiste Caruel and Jacques-Florent Robillard, and with at least one other partner from outside the family: Bernard-Jean-Etienne Delaître.⁹⁸ Szramkiewicz reported that he could locate few details about the composition of the first Robillard firms, but noted that the individual

⁹⁴ Romuald Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 349.

⁹⁵ Napoléon Bonaparte, *Correspondance de Napoléon I* (Paris Imprimerie Imperiale, 1862), 12: 126.

⁹⁶ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 349.

⁹⁷ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 349.

⁹⁸ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 347.

partners of the 1795 Robillard firm each invested 50,000 livres in assignats, the paper currency of France, to form a society to sell tobacco until 1800.⁹⁹ *Robillard, oncle et neveu* thrived under the Directory until the partners dissolved the firm and formed a second society in 1800.

Robillard, oncle et neveux does not appear among the tobacco manufacturers or merchants of Paris listed in the *Almanach du Commerce de Paris Pour L'An VII* published in 1798, which seems odd. However, we do find the seven individuals who formed the second Robillard partnership of 1800: Biancourt, Carruel [sic], Chapelin and Chapelin (C.J.), Delaître, Robillard and Robillard (P.A.) listed as individual “négociants,” or businessmen, all based on the rue Saint-Nicaise.¹⁰⁰

In the subsequent edition for *An VIII*, *Robillard, oncle et neveu* at the “Maison Longueville, Tuileries” are listed among the fabricants du tabac, or tobacco manufacturers of Paris.¹⁰¹ The names of the seven future partners of the 1800 Robillard society, however, no longer appear in the list of businessmen or “négociants” in this edition.

The differences in the way the Robillard partners elected to list the firm and themselves in the almanac of *An VII* and *An VIII* allow us to make some educated guesses

⁹⁹ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 347-348.

¹⁰⁰ M. Duverneuil and Jean de la Tynna, *Almanach du Commerce de Paris Pour L'An VII* (Paris: Chez Duverneuil et de la Tynna, 1799), 351, 352, 355, 242.

¹⁰¹ M. Duverneuil and Jean de la Tynna, *Almanach du Commerce de Paris Pour L'An VIII* (Paris: Chez Duverneuil et de la Tynna, 1800), 242.

about the 1795 Robillard society and about the way the partners sought to build the Robillard brand.

The rue Saint-Nicaise served as one of two entrances to the Hôtel de Longueville. The fact that all seven names of the partners of the second Robillard society appear in the *An VII* almanac, and are listed as “négociants” based on the rue Saint-Nicaise, suggests that the Chapelain brothers and Charles Biancour could have belonged to the 1795 Robillard society along with Bernard-Jean-Etienne Delaître, Jean-Baptiste Caruel, and the two Robillards. They very likely knew one another.

The disappearance of the individual listings and new listing for *Robillard, oncle et neveux* to the Hôtel de Longueville in the almanac of the following year, suggests the partners wanted to connect the firm to a well-known historical site and to build the *Robillard* brand. The Hôtel de Longueville figured in French history as one of the most famous stately homes in the Tuileries and, in recent years, as the site of one of the most important tobacco factories in Paris.

Pierre-Antoine Robillard, Jacques-Florent Robillard, Jean-Baptiste Caruel, Jacques-Marie Chapelain, Charles-Jacques Chapelain, Charles Biancour, and Bernard-Jean-Etienne Delaître formed a second society to manufacture and sell tobacco for a period of nine years in 1800. They named the new firm: *Robillard oncle, neveux et Cie.*¹⁰² At the same time, the Robillard partners acquired complete control of the Hôtel de Longueville for a period of six to nine years. The partners could expect income from tobacco sales and from renting space to residential and commercial tenants.

¹⁰² Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 348-349.

The Robillard partners highlighted the new firm's connection to the Hôtel de Longueville in the *Almanach du Commerce de Paris Pour L'An IX* (1801-1802). The entry is unusually long and reads: "Robillard, oncle, neveu et Comp, tenant la manufacture de Tabacs de la Maison Longueville (fabric), R. S. Nicaise, 326 Tuileries."¹⁰³ Every entry for the Robillard firm in subsequent editions of the almanac makes clear reference to the Hôtel de Longueville.

In 1804, Napoléon appropriated part of the Hôtel de Longueville for the Imperial stables. Napoléon provided compensation for lost revenue by reducing the cost of the lease for *Robillard, oncle, neveu et Compagnie* from 80,000 francs per year to 40,500 francs per year.¹⁰⁴ The partners responded by listing *Robillard, oncle, neveu et Compagnie* at "Rue S. Thomas du Louvre 11 hôtel Longueville" in the 1806 edition of the almanac.¹⁰⁵

As noted, Napoléon took complete control of the Hôtel de Longueville in 1806. The Robillard partners, however, decided to maintain the links connecting *Robillard oncle, neveux et Compagnie* to the Hôtel de Longueville even after the firm moved to new quarters on the rue Grange Batelière, the Hôtel d'Augny, and the boulevard Montmartre.

¹⁰³ M. Duverneuil and Jean de la Tynna, *Almanach du Commerce de Paris Pour L'An IX* (Paris: Chez Duverneuil et de la Tynna, 1802), 219.

¹⁰⁴ *Sommier des biens nationaux*, 1: 49.

¹⁰⁵ M. Duverneuil and Jean de la Tynna, *Almanach du Commerce de Paris, Année 1806* (Paris: Chez Duverneuil et de la Tynna, 1806), 245.

The 1807 address for *Robillard oncle, neveux et Compagnie* in the *Almanach du Commerce* reads: “Robillard, oncle, neveux et comp., *manufacture de tabacs de l'hôtel Longueville*, boulevard Montmartre 12, et place du Palais du Tribunat.”¹⁰⁶ The partners may have wanted to maintain a base in the Tuileries at the Palais du Tribunat or may have simply been waiting to move into their new properties. In either case, the Robillard partners clearly wanted to maintain their public connection to the Hôtel de Longueville. The entry in the 1808 *Almanach du Commerce de Paris* omits any reference to the place du Palais du Tribunat, but is otherwise identical.¹⁰⁷

Pierre-Antoine Robillard died, in 1802, reducing the number of partners to six. The partners kept the same name and address for the firm at the Hôtel de Longueville until the second society was dissolved in 1809. The partners registered the third society as *Robillard et Compagnie*, formed with the declared purpose of “manufacturing tobacco at the Hôtel d’Augny” and with a license to operate for eighteen years.¹⁰⁸

The new name, *Robillard et Compagnie*, reflected the structure of the new partnership. However, the Robillard partners evidently felt that continuity with the past mattered and that their brand affiliation with the Hôtel de Longueville was worth preserving. The new business address appeared as “Robillard oncle, neveu et Compagnie

¹⁰⁶ Jean de la Tynna, *Almanach du Commerce de Paris, Année 1807* (Paris: Chez J. de la Tynna, 1807), 233.

¹⁰⁷ Jean de la Tynna, *Almanach du Commerce de Paris, Année 1808* (Paris: Chez J. de la Tynna, 1808), 242.

¹⁰⁸ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 349.

boulev. Montmartre, 12, *manufacture de tabac de l'Hôtel de Longueville*" in the *Almanach du Commerce de Paris* of 1809.¹⁰⁹

The partners listed the firm in precisely the same way in the *Almanach* of 1810.¹¹⁰ Napoléon ended the Robillard tobacco venture abruptly when he reinstated the state monopoly on the manufacture of tobacco on December 29, 1810.¹¹¹ In June of 1811, the Robillard partners dissolved *Robillard et Compagnie* and distributed their earnings, which were substantial.¹¹²

In the *Almanach* of 1811, the Robillard partners changed the name of the firm to "Robillard et Compagnie;" but continued to include "*manufacture de tabac de l'Hôtel de Longueville*" in the firm's business address.¹¹³ Whatever sentiments the individual partners may or may not have held towards the Hôtel de Longueville, the historical record confirms that the Longueville address was an essential component of the Robillard brand from 1800 until the firm's dissolution in 1811.

¹⁰⁹ Jean de la Tynna, *Almanach du Commerce de Paris, Année 1809* (Paris: Chez J. de la Tynna, 1809), 272.

¹¹⁰ Jean de la Tynna, *Almanach du Commerce de Paris, Année 1810* (Paris: Chez J. de la Tynna, 1810), 295.

¹¹¹ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 350.

¹¹² Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 350.

¹¹³ Jean de la Tynna, *Almanach du Commerce de Paris, Année 1811* (Paris: Chez J. de la Tynna, 1811), 322.

Chapter IV

Hôtel de Longueville and the Galeries du Louvre

The space and central location of the Hôtel de Longueville near the Seine offered clear commercial benefits to the Robillard partners. The Hôtel de Longueville was also one of the oldest buildings in the Tuileries, had served as home to royalty, and offered a limited measure of status to the occupants.

The Hôtel de Longueville faced onto the rue St. Thomas du Louvre and had a second entrance on the rue Saint-Nicaise to the west. Both the rue Saint-Nicaise and the rue St. Thomas du Louvre extended from the rue des Orties to the rue Saint-Honoré. The rue des Orties ran parallel to the Seine from the rue St. Thomas du Louvre and connected the rue Saint-Nicaise to the streets around the old Louvre castle.¹¹⁴

The Hôtel de Longueville is important to Géricault scholarship, however, for other reasons. The Hôtel de Longueville was situated close to the Galeries du Louvre, where Carle Vernet and his family resided from 1762 to 1806.

The Hôtel de Longueville and the Galeries du Louvre sat on large rectangular tracts of land parallel to one another and separated by the rue des Orties and an assortment of buildings between the old Louvre and the new Tuileries palace. The location of the Vernet apartments in the Galeries du Louvre compelled Théodore Géricault and the other members of the Robillard-Caruel family to walk close by the

¹¹⁴ Adolphe Berty, *Topographie Historique de Vieux Paris* (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1861), 1: 256-259.

Vernet residence when they traveled between the Hôtel de Longueville and the Robillard and Caruel residences in the Faubourg Saint-Germain.

In 1806, Napoléon evicted Vernet and his family from their apartments in the Galeries du Louvre, the same year he ordered the Robillard firm from the Hôtel de Longueville.¹¹⁵ The Vernet family in the Galeries du Louvre and the Robillards in the Hôtel de Longueville, therefore, lived and worked just hundreds of meters apart during some of the most turbulent events in French history. The Hôtel de Longueville disappeared shortly after the July Monarchy, but the Galeries du Louvre continues to stand as a monument on the banks of the Seine to this day.

Buildings on the site of the future Hôtel de Longueville can be reliably dated to 1373.¹¹⁶ During the medieval period most of the land west of the rue St. Thomas du Louvre was owned by the church and the crown and remained largely undeveloped until the mid-sixteenth century.¹¹⁷ The few homes on the west side of the rue St. Thomas du Louvre faced the Louvre castle and had gardens in the rear.

The dating of the royal building projects west of the rue Saint-Nicaise was hotly debated during the nineteenth century, but records suggest that Catherine de Medici asked her architects to draw up plans for a new palace and new gardens in the space west of the rue St. Thomas du Louvre around 1550.¹¹⁸ The Tuileries, as this new palace was

¹¹⁵ Olivier Merson, “Les Logements d’Artistes au Louvre,” *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 24 (September, 1881): 277.

¹¹⁶ Berty, *Topographie*, 1: 103.

¹¹⁷ Berty, *Topographie*, 1: 258.

¹¹⁸ Berty, *Topographie*, 1: 256-9.

named, would extend north from the Seine and be joined to the old Louvre castle by a long gallery built alongside to the river. New gardens, designed in the Italian style, would occupy the large rectangular space created by the new gallery and the new palace and would be separated from the estates near the old Louvre palace by a wall running along the rue Saint-Nicaise.¹¹⁹

In 1595, Henri IV finished most of the construction of the Tuileries palace and the Galeries du Louvre, as this new long building connecting the Tuileries to the old Louvre was called.¹²⁰ Henri IV had a more practical use for the gardens and royal galleries planned by Catherine, however.

Catherine began planting mulberry trees for silk production during the sixteenth century.¹²¹ Henri IV expanded the planting of mulberry trees to royal lands across France, including the Tuileries gardens, in 1596.¹²² Henri IV also took a much more programmatic approach to the training of artisans and, in 1608, he commanded that the apartments of the Galeries du Louvre be used as residences and workshops for artisans skilled in the production of textiles and silk and for other master craftsmen.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Berty, *Topographie*, 1: 256-259.

¹²⁰ *Louvre de Hubert Robert*, ed. by Marie-Catherine Sahout (Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1979), 15.

¹²¹ François Michel, *Recherches sur le Commerce: la Fabrication et l'Usage des Étoffes Soies, d'Or et d'Argent et Autres Tissus Précieux, Principalement en France, Pendant le Moyen âge* (Paris: Crapelet, 1854), 2: 410.

¹²² Poirson, *Histoire*, 3: 279-280.

¹²³ Poirson, *Histoire*, 3: 279-280.

Thierry Mariage and Graham Larkin make the explicit claim that Henri IV's use of the Galeries de Louvre had a positive effect on other residents of the Tuileries quarter and that André Le Nôtre and his father Jean Le Nôtre, who designed the royal gardens, benefited from their close proximity to this diverse collection of artists and artisans.¹²⁴

Indeed, Henri IV compelled artists residing in the Galeries du Louvre to take on apprentices and train them to the highest standards within a fixed five-year period if they wished to earn income from private clients while based in the royal apartments.¹²⁵ The edicts of the period clearly indicate that Henry IV wanted the residents of the Galeries du Louvre and other master artisans in his employ to inspire and stimulate the larger population of artists and artisans across France.¹²⁶

The Hôtel de Longueville changed hands several times between 1600 and 1650. A royal edict of 1607 gave the estate to Robert de Vieuville, who sold the Hôtel de Vieuville to Charles Albert de Luynes in 1620.¹²⁷ De Luynes purchased the property to the rear of the building on rue Saint-Nicaise in 1621 and his widow, Marie de Rohan, sold it and the Hôtel de Luynes to the duc du Chevreuse in 1622.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Thierry Mariage and Graham Larkin, *The World of André Le Nôtre* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 31-32.

¹²⁵ François Michel, *Recherches sur le Commerce*, 419.

¹²⁶ François Michel, *Recherches sur le Commerce*, 410-420.

¹²⁷ Berty, *Topographie*, 1: 103.

¹²⁸ Berty, *Topographie*, 1: 103.

The duc du Chevreuse hired Clément Métezeau, one of the architects of the Louvre, to renovate his new properties.¹²⁹ Métezeau constructed a new building, the Hôtel de Chevreuse, to face the rue St. Thomas du Louvre. Métezeau's design called for ornate gardens in the rear to rival those of the Tuileries palace, situated on the opposite side of the rue Saint-Nicaise.¹³⁰ Frescos of Aurora by Mignard in the rue St. Thomas du Louvre entrance hall added to the stature of the Hôtel de Chevreuse.¹³¹

A number of other new residences dignified the streets around the Tuileries. The marquis du Rambouillet purchased property next to the Hôtel de Chevreuse on the rue St. Thomas du Louvre. The marquis du Rambouillet rebuilt the Hôtel de Rambouillet and also extended the gardens in the rear to the rue Saint-Nicaise. In 1641, the Hôtel de Rambouillet was considered one of the most beautiful homes in France and the equal to that of any king or queen, precisely as the marquis no doubt intended.¹³²

In 1662, the former home of the duc du Chevreuse came into the possession of Louis XIV, who traded the Hôtel de Chevreuse for a property owned by the duc de Longueville.¹³³ The Hôtel de Chevreuse became known as the Hôtel de Longueville, or Hôtel Longueville, or maison Longueville, from this point.

¹²⁹ Berty, *Topographie*, 1: 103.

¹³⁰ Berty, *Topographie*, 1: 103.

¹³¹ George Bonnefons and Albert Lenoir, *Les hôtels historiques de Paris: histoire-architecture* (Paris: Lecou, 1852), 305.

¹³² Berty, *Topographie*, 1: 107.

¹³³ Berty, *Topographie*, 1: 104.

Louis XIV was much more interested in the new royal residence in Versailles than the Paris palace. Royal architects removed most of the Tuileries gardens on the rue Saint-Nicaise, including the wall that ran along that street, and created a new open space to serve as a public stage for military parades, pomp, and jousting. The new name for this space was the Place du Carrousel, as military drills are called in France.¹³⁴

The Hôtel de Longueville acquired a rich, impressive reputation during the seventeenth century as a center of intrigue, a site of intellectual debate, a religious retreat, and as the residence of the Duchess de Longueville, an important figure in French history.¹³⁵ Several ambassadors and scientists lived in the Hôtel de Longueville during the early eighteenth century before it was sold back to the crown in 1746.¹³⁶

The massive ornate exterior of the Galeries du Louvre remained largely unchanged throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The tall, rectangular structure stood as an iconographic landmark on the banks of the Seine. The Galeries du Louvre was, and still is, one of the architectural cornerstones of the Tuileries quarter, linking the present to the glorious past of Catherine de Medici and Henri IV.

The Galeries du Louvre retained its original function and provided an elite group of royal artisans and artists appointed by a succession of monarchs with workshops and

¹³⁴ Berty, *Topographie*, 1: 281.

¹³⁵ Bonnefons and Lenoir, *Les hôtels historiques de Paris*, 280-302.

¹³⁶ Berty, *Topographie*, 1: 104.

residences.¹³⁷ The thirty apartments of the elegant, rectangular building faced the Seine on one side and the rue des Orties on the other and were open to the public.¹³⁸

The top floor of Galeries du Louvre, decorated by Poussin around 1641, housed many of the most important paintings and objects in the royal collection of art, even after Louis XIV moved to Versailles in 1678.¹³⁹ The apartments and workshops below were free to the royal craftsmen and their families. The residents could either work on the floors above their apartments or arrange space for workshops in the old Louvre.¹⁴⁰

The Galeries du Louvre had a sous-sol, or basement, and three floors: the rez-de-chaussée, or first floor connected to a common corridor, and two upper floors.¹⁴¹ As residents moved in or out, the community of the Galeries du Louvre would change: “a sculptor would replace a painter, an engraver, or an optician.”¹⁴² When Joseph Vernet, Carle’s father, moved into the Galeries du Louvre, in 1762, he spent a small fortune installing marble counters and devices to automatically open and close doors.¹⁴³

¹³⁷ Leora Auslander, *Taste and Power: Furnishing Modern France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 90-91.

¹³⁸ Nicole Garnier, “Logement et atelier de Hubert Robert,” in *Louvre de Hubert Robert*, ed. by Marie-Catherine Sahout (Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1979), 11.

¹³⁹ *Louvre de Hubert Robert*, 15.

¹⁴⁰ Garnier, “Logement et Atelier de Hubert Robert,” 12.

¹⁴¹ Merson, “Les Logements d’Artistes au Louvre,” 24: 277.

¹⁴² Léon Lagrange, *Joseph Vernet, Sa Vie, Sa Famille, Son Siècle* (Bruxelles: Labroue et Compagnie, 1858), 87.

¹⁴³ Lagrange, *Vernet, Sa Vie*, 87.

In 1777, Louis XVI began to explore the idea of transforming the top floor of the Galeries du Louvre into a museum open to the public.¹⁴⁴ After considerable debate, architects settled on the design: a single, long gallery running the length of the building illuminated by windows on both walls.¹⁴⁵ The public would be able to access the workshops of the royal painters and artisans on the rue des Orties and could also view some of the finest royal works in the royal collection on the floors above. The architectural conflation of the royal workshops and the royal museum in this magnificent building would increase the majesty and the stature of the Galeries du Louvre.

The stately homes of the rue St. Thomas du Louvre had lost much of their former cachet by the time Louis XV took possession of the Hôtel de Longueville in 1746. The space around the rue Saint-Nicaise was home to shops of different kinds and various stables. The Place du Carrousel still served as a military parade ground, but the official residence of the monarchy was in Versailles and the aristocracy had largely dispersed to the Faubourg St. Germain, the rue Saint-Honoré, or the Place Vendôme.

In 1746, Louis XV needed cash much more than he needed another house and provided the Hôtel de Longueville to the Fermiers généraux, the royal tax collectors, to use as the Paris center for the royal tobacco monopoly.¹⁴⁶ The tax-farmers had no use for

¹⁴⁴ *Louvre de Hubert Robert*, 15-19.

¹⁴⁵ *Louvre de Hubert Robert*, 17-19.

¹⁴⁶ Louis Dussieux and Eudoxe Soulié, *Mémoires du Duc de Luynes sur la Cour de Louis XV (1735-1758)* (Paris: Didot, 1861), 7: 316.

aesthetics and invited Pierre Contant d'Ivry, another royal architect, to redesign the gardens and buildings of the Hôtel Longueville to serve their needs.¹⁴⁷

Contant built three large rectangular buildings for drying tobacco in the square court of the Hôtel de Longueville opening onto the rue St. Thomas du Louvre.¹⁴⁸ Contant ripped out what remained of Métezeau's famous gardens in the rear of the Hôtel de Longueville. A series of cheap new buildings accessible from the rue Saint-Nicaise filled the space formerly occupied by the gardens.¹⁴⁹ The Mignard frescoes on the first floor of the Hôtel de Longueville somehow survived the changes.¹⁵⁰

The Contant renovation transformed the Hôtel de Longueville and removed many of the architectural vestiges linking the building to its storied past. Critics viewed these changes as an emblem of aesthetic and aristocratic decline. The stables and shabby shops standing in place of the former gardens were clearly visible from the Place du Carrousel and the Tuileries palace across the rue Saint-Nicaise and were deemed to be in the poorest taste.¹⁵¹ In 1787, one critic wrote that the Hôtel de Longueville, once the home of

¹⁴⁷ Charles François Roland de Virlois, *Dictionnaire D'Architecture, Civile, Militaire, et Navale* (Paris: Libraires Associés, 1770), 1: 406.

¹⁴⁸ Daniel J. Grange and Dominique Poulot, *L'Esprit des Lieux: le Patrimoine et la Cite* (Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1997), 383.

¹⁴⁹ Grange and Poulot, *L'Esprit des Lieux*, 383.

¹⁵⁰ Bonnefons and Lenoir, *Les hôtels historiques de Paris*, 305.

¹⁵¹ Pierre Thomas Nicholas Hurtaut Magny, *Dictionnaire Historique de la Ville de Paris et des Environs* (Paris: Chez Moutard, 1779), 3: 161.

dukes and duchesses had become a home to prostitutes, clerks, and commerce of the lowest sort.¹⁵²

The Robillard partners made good use of the space and central location of the Hôtel de Longueville and made the Hôtel de Longueville an important component of the Robillard brand until 1811. The fabled history of the Hôtel de Longueville, one of the most important residences on the rue St. Thomas du Louvre, the home of some of France's most important aristocrats, and a center for royal intrigue, imbued the Hôtel de Longueville with a mystique that outlasted the changes made to the building after the Contant renovation.

The Hôtel de Longueville may have seemed like an impressive historical building to Géricault when arrived in Paris as a boy fresh from provincial Rouen in 1795 or 1796. Dorcy reported that young Théodore regarded the impresario Franconi as one of the most important men in France.¹⁵³ However, Théodore had the confidence and wit to publicly challenge the “prince of the Antilles” before a crowd of adults at fifteen or sixteen.

The youth from Rouen who once viewed Franconi as one of the greatest men in France would mature into one of France's most astute social critics. We have no idea if Géricault's regard for the Hôtel de Longueville evolved the same way. It is likely, however, that Géricault at fifteen, or eighteen, viewed the Hôtel de Longueville very differently than he had as a boy of five or ten.

¹⁵² J.A. Dulaure, *Nouvelle Description des Curiosités de Paris* (Paris: Chez Le Jay, 1787), 2: 81.

¹⁵³ Blanc, *Histoire des Peintres Français*, 1: 40.

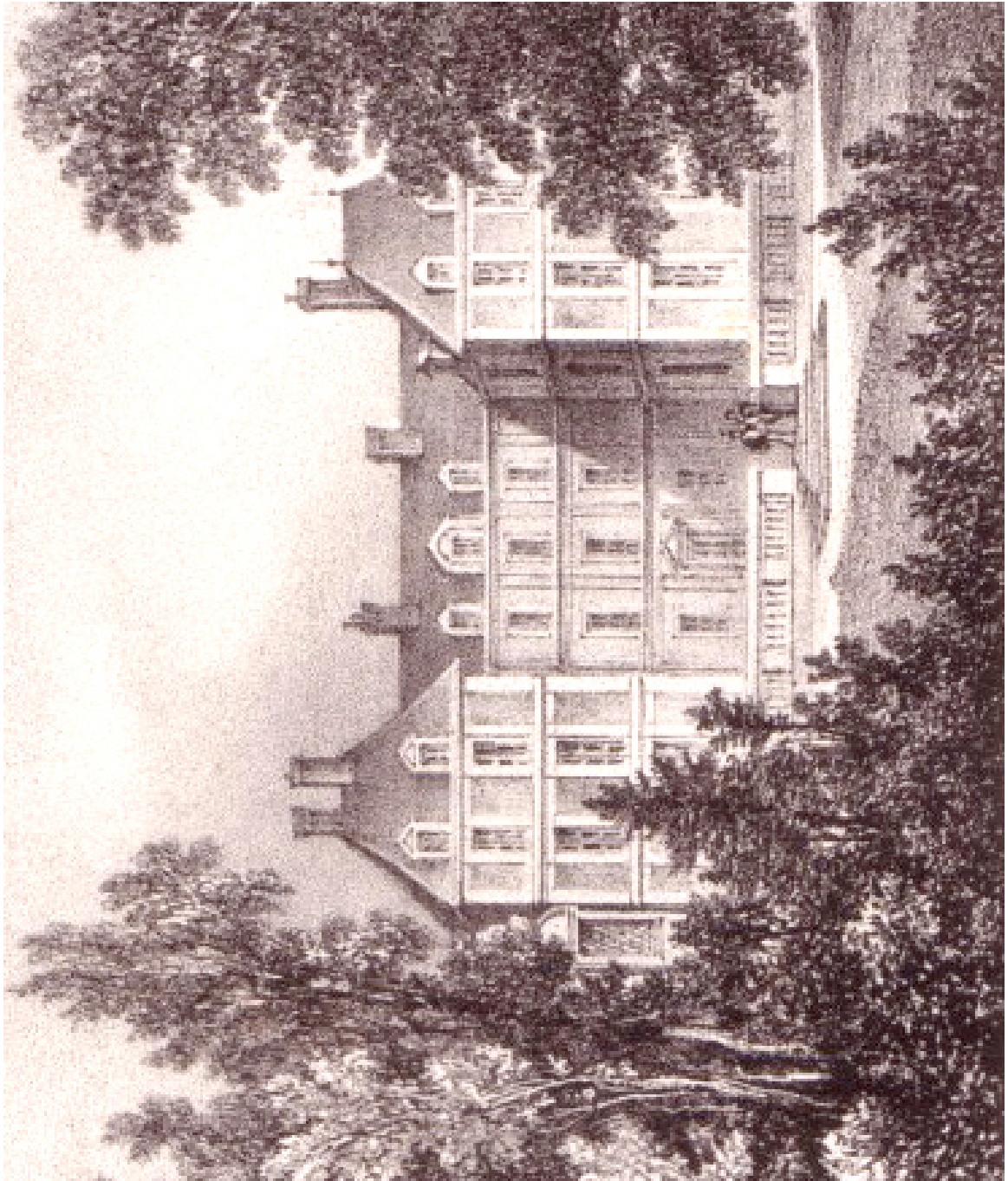


Fig. 1. *Hotel de Chevreuse*. Ministry Lithographie Champin. L'hôtel de Chevreuse en 1650. Série « Rues et monuments de Paris au XIXe siècle » 1838. http://www.economie.gouv.fr/directions_services/cedef/ministere_ville/pages/lv4.html (accessed, June 22, 2010).

Chapter V

Hôtel de Longueville, the Galeries du Louvre, and the Terror

The Hôtel de Longueville and the Galeries du Louvre were two of the most important architectural structures in Paris and reflected the political and economic fortunes of the individuals and families who lived and worked within. Yet, by 1750, the roles of the Hôtel de Longueville and the Galeries du Louvre had been reversed.

The Hôtel de Longueville served as the residence of royalty, princes, princesses, and aristocrats. Yet, by 1792, the Hôtel de Longueville was part stable, part tobacco factory and warehouse, and home to a variety of shops and residences. Moreover, the changes to the architectural and economic order of the Tuileries extended to other sites on the rue St. Thomas du Louvre.¹⁵⁴ The Hôtel Rambouillet, once considered the most beautiful home in France, had been knocked down and replaced by a theatre in 1792.¹⁵⁵

In 1792, the Galeries du Louvre stood as a powerful symbol of tradition and of the authority of the monarchy and aristocracy, and retained its magnificent exterior. Hubert Robert and d'Angiviller prepared the royal collection for the planned museum on the top floor.¹⁵⁶ The artistic community of Paris experienced the same turmoil as the rest of the populace. But royal plans to build the museum continued. Pierre Laurent, one of France's

¹⁵⁴ Louis Bergeron, "Banquiers, Négotiants et Manufacturiers Parisiens du Directoire à L'Empire," (PhD diss., Université de Paris IV, 1974), 15.

¹⁵⁵ Berty, *Topographie*, 1: 107.

¹⁵⁶ *Louvre de Hubert Robert*, 15-19.

finest engravers and a key figure in this thesis, won the commission to produce a catalogue of the paintings of the *Cabinet du Roi* in 1791.¹⁵⁷

This chapter examines the impact of the French Revolution on the Robillard and Vernet families during the early days of the Terror. I will present evidence that points to links between the families dating to 1793. I will also introduce several new members of the Robillard family, individuals who Géricault almost certainly knew as a youth in Paris.

Germain Bazin cites three documents placing *Robillard oncle et neveux* in the Hôtel de Longueville in 1792.¹⁵⁸ Jean Sagne argues that the Robillard family first obtained a commission to sell tobacco out of the Hôtel de Longueville thanks to the intervention of the Monneron family in 1792.¹⁵⁹

Romuald Szramkiewicz, however, in his study of the regents and censeurs of the Bank of France, dates Robillard family residency in the Hôtel de Longueville to 1785.¹⁶⁰ According to Szramkiewicz, Jacques-Florent Robillard, the future censeur and regent of the Bank of France, was already living and working in the Hôtel de Longueville in 1785 for the Fermiers généraux as contrôleur de la Manufacture de Tabacs de Paris.¹⁶¹ In addition, Szramkiewicz confirms that Pierre-Antoine Robillard worked in the tobacco trade in the employ of the Fermiers généraux and was awarded a pension of 2,000 livres a

¹⁵⁷ Frédéric Clarac, *Musée de Sculpture Antique et Moderne* (Paris: Imprimerie National, 1850), 3: cccxxix.

¹⁵⁸ Bazin, *Géricault*, 1: 23.

¹⁵⁹ Sagne, *Géricault*, 24.

¹⁶⁰ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 347.

¹⁶¹ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 347.

year on November 22, 1794, for his thirty-eight years of service, including his work in Dieppe.¹⁶²

The Hôtel de Longueville, however, was not just the center of the Robillard tobacco business. The Hôtel de Longueville was the private home of Jacques-Florent Robillard and his family from 1785 to 1799.¹⁶³ Jacques-Florent married Angélique-Louise Morize in 1785; and on July 4, 1786, Angélique-Louise gave birth to their first child, Pierre Robillard, in Paris.¹⁶⁴ As noted, Jean-Baptiste Caruel was also in Paris, in 1790, working as a lawyer for the parliament of Paris.¹⁶⁵ Jean-Baptiste Caruel, Pierre-Antoine, and Jacques-Florent Robillard, therefore, occupied positions that allowed them to take full advantage of the end of the royal tobacco monopoly in 1791.

In the summer of 1792, Jacques-Florent Robillard was living in the Hôtel de Longueville with his wife and their son, Pierre. Angélique-Louise Robillard was pregnant with their second child and Pierre had just celebrated his sixth birthday.¹⁶⁶ The political situation in Paris, however, was extremely tense. Street battles led to confrontations inside the Tuileries palace.

¹⁶² Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 342.

¹⁶³ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 347.

¹⁶⁴ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 346.

¹⁶⁵ Bazin, *Géricault*, 1: 23.

¹⁶⁶ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 347.

On July 25, 1792, Swiss guards occupied the apartments of the Galeries du Louvre closest to the Tuileries to prevent further attacks on the palace.¹⁶⁷

On the night of August 9, 1792, the tocsins of Paris called the *fédérés*, or federations of troops, and sans-culottes to march to positions in the Tuileries on the rue St. Thomas du Louvre, the rue Saint-Nicaise, the rue des Orties, and the rue Fromanteu around the Hôtel de Longueville.¹⁶⁸ Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette left the Tuileries with their children on August 10 before the attack on the Tuileries actually began.¹⁶⁹

Napoléon Bonaparte described how he ran that day to a furniture shop in the Place du Carrousel so he could watch the assault and on the way encountered a sans-culotte carrying the head of a royal guard on a pike.¹⁷⁰ Napoléon later claimed that the stacked bodies of the Swiss guards massacred in the aftermath of the attack and the mutilation of corpses by women and men dressed well horrified him more than any battle.¹⁷¹

Bourrienne, Napoléon's friend and aide, reported that Napoléon's "furniture shop" was actually a pawnshop set-up in the Hôtel de Longueville to allow aristocrats

¹⁶⁷ Jean-Gabriel Peltier, *Histoire de la Révolution du 10 Aoust 1792* (London: n.p., 1795), 1: 105.

¹⁶⁸ Peltier, *Histoire*, 1: 122.

¹⁶⁹ Louis Mortimer-Ternaux, *Histoire de La Terreur: 1792-1794* (Paris: Levy, 1863), 305-6.

¹⁷⁰ Louis Antoine Fauvelet de Bourrienne, *Mémoires de M. de Bourrienne, Ministre d'État, sur Napoléon: le Directoire, le Consulat, l'Empire, et la Restauration* (Stuttgart: Charles Hoffman, 1829), 1: 52.

¹⁷¹ Antoine-Claire Thibaudeau, *Histoire Générale de Napoléon Bonaparte: de Sa Vie Privée et Publique* (Paris: Ponthieu, 1827), 1: 43-46.

fleeing Revolution to exchange their expensive baubles for hard currency.¹⁷² Bourrienne confirmed that Napoléon had pawned his watch at this “national auction-house” set up by Bourrienne’s brother and several partners several months before the attack.¹⁷³

Bourrienne’s account situates Napoléon in the Hôtel de Longueville during the attack and places Napoléon’s decision to later destroy most of the building in a new light. The episode illustrates how the Hôtel de Longueville was used and reminds us how physically close the edifice was to events that transformed France and the world.

We do not know how Jacques-Florent Robillard and Angélique-Louise reacted during the assault on the Tuileries on August 10, 1792. Did the family flee the violence, or remain in the Hôtel de Longueville during the attack and massacre that followed? Jacques-Florent Robillard may well have moved the family across the Seine to the home of Pierre-Antoine and Marie-Thérèse on the rue de Belle Chasse.

We do know that Angélique-Louise Robillard was pregnant at the time of the battle. Angélique gave birth to their second son, Amédée-Selim Robillard, in Paris on October 4, 1792.¹⁷⁴ We can surmise that Angélique-Louise and Marie-Thérèse Robillard did all they could to keep Pierre and Amédée-Selim safe during the attack. We can also surmise that Jacques-Florent Robillard, Pierre-Antoine Robillard, and Jean-Baptiste Caruel were compelled to stay as close to the Hôtel de Longueville as possible to protect their business from the rampaging mobs throughout this time.

¹⁷² Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, 1: 52.

¹⁷³ Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, 1: 52.

¹⁷⁴ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 347.

We know more about the Vernet family actions on August 10, 1792. Carle Vernet was definitely in the Galeries du Louvre with his wife Fanny and their young children when the fighting broke out. Vernet hagiographers describe the painter racing from the Galeries du Louvre through a hail of musket fire.¹⁷⁵ The Vernets fled the Galeries du Louvre once the fighting began and eventually reached safety in the home of Fanny's family on the Rue de Coq.¹⁷⁶

The Vernet family residence in the Galeries du Louvre dates to 1762. Louis XV rewarded Claude-Joseph Vernet, Carle's father, with an apartment and atelier in the Galeries du Louvre for completing a series of paintings of France's most important ports.¹⁷⁷ Carle Vernet was born in Bordeaux, in 1758, while his father was working on this commission.¹⁷⁸

As noted, Carle Vernet learned to paint from his father, Joseph. Carle was a prodigy. Carle began competing in the Prix de Rome competitions at age eighteen and eventually won the grand prize in 1782.¹⁷⁹ Jacques-Louis David, born a decade earlier,

¹⁷⁵ Germain Sarrut and B. Saint-Edme, *Biographie des Hommes du Jour* (Paris: Henri Krabbe, 1836), 2. 1: 305.

¹⁷⁶ Sarrut and Saint-Edme, *Biographie*, 2. 1: 305.

¹⁷⁷ Léon Lagrange, *Joseph Vernet et la Peinture au XVIIIe Siècle* (Paris: Didier, 1864), 117.

¹⁷⁸ William Leist Redwin Cates, *A Dictionary of General Biography* (London: Longmans, 1857), 1169.

¹⁷⁹ George Long, *Supplement to the Penny Cyclopaedia of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge* (London: G Knight, 1846), 2: 691.

won the Prix de Rome on his fifth attempt in 1774.¹⁸⁰ In 1787, Carle Vernet married Fanny Moreau, daughter of Jean Moreau, the famous engraver and friend of Joseph Vernet.¹⁸¹ Joseph Vernet died in 1789, the same year Fanny gave birth to Jean-Émile-Horace Vernet, and the apartments in the Galerie du Louvre passed to Carle Vernet.¹⁸²

The attack on the Tuileries palace on August 10, 1792, and the arrest of Louis XVI triggered massacres all over France. In late 1792, the Convention discussed the fate of Louis XVI and guillotined the monarch before a crowd of thousands in the Place de la Révolution west of the Tuileries palace on January 21, 1793.¹⁸³ The execution of Louis XVI occurred roughly a 1500 meters from the Robillard residences in the Hôtel de Longueville and on the rue de Belle Chasse.

The Convention dismantled the guillotine in the Place de la Révolution after the execution of Louis XVI in January. The beheadings resumed on April 7, 1793. The location for the guillotine, however, was the Place du Carrousel, close to the Robillard home in the Hôtel de Longueville and the Vernet residence in the Galeries du Louvre.¹⁸⁴ On the same day the Committee for Public Safety met in the Hôtel d'Elbœuf, adjacent to

¹⁸⁰ Warren Roberts, *Jacques-Louis David, Revolutionary Artist: Art, Politics and the French Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 12.

¹⁸¹ Lagrange, *Joseph Vernet et le Peinture au XVIII Siècle*, 289.

¹⁸² Cates, *Dictionary*, 1169.

¹⁸³ Louis François Jauffret, ed. *Histoire Impartiale du Procès de Louis XVI, Ci-Devant Roi des Français: ou Recueil Complet et Authentique de Tous les Rapports Faits à la Convention Nationale* (Paris: Perlet, 1793), 7: 311-312.

¹⁸⁴ John Wilson Croker, *History of the Guillotine* (London: John Murray, 1853), 69.

the Hôtel de Longueville on the rue Saint-Nicaise, and continued to meet there until the Committee relocated to the Tuileries.¹⁸⁵

The Convention guillotined between twelve and twenty individuals in the Place du Carrousel between April 7 and May 6, 1793. Henri Sanson, the grandson of the executioner, compiled an exhaustive list of every individual his grandfather guillotined during his career. Sanson reported that his grandfather guillotined twenty victims between April 7 and May 8, 1793.¹⁸⁶ John Croker, a nineteenth-century historian, puts the number at twelve individuals, but may have omitted individuals executed for non-political crimes.¹⁸⁷ On May 8, 1793, the Convention ordered the guillotine moved to a new location and eventually decided to place the instrument back in the Place de la Révolution, close to the spot Louis XVI met his fate.¹⁸⁸

The Croker and Sanson numbers differ. Yet, both men present a clear picture of what took place during the actual executions. Sanson escorted one to three victims from one of the Paris prisons to the guillotine situated in the Place du Carrousel every two or three days during the month of April. Large crowds followed the red carts carrying those

¹⁸⁵ François-Alphonse Aulard, *The French Revolution: A Political History, 1789-1804*, trans. Bernard Mall (New York: Charles Scribner, 1910), 2: 239-240.

¹⁸⁶ Henri Sanson, *Mémoires des Sansons: Sept Générations d'Exécuteurs 1688-1847* (Paris: Dupray de la Mahérie, 1863), 4: 77-85.

¹⁸⁷ Croker, *Guillotine*, 69-70.

¹⁸⁸ Croker, *Guillotine*, 69-70.

assigned to die and then joined the mob already waiting at the site of execution to jeer the condemned as each climbed the scaffold.¹⁸⁹

The guillotining in the Place du Carrousel occurred over four weeks in the spring of 1793 while Jacques-Florent Robillard, Carle Vernet, their families, and the other residents of the Tuileries quarter were trying to live normal lives. Angélique had an infant son, Amédée-Selim. Pierre Robillard, at six, was certainly old enough to understand the massacres of the previous autumn and the executions taking place almost daily in the Place du Carrousel nearby. Three times a week crowds assembled around the guillotine close to the Robillard family home to watch the blade rise and fall. Fanny and Carle Vernet endured the same torment with their children, and much worse later.

Albert Soboul and Raymonde Monnier argue that some of the residents of the Tuileries initially supported the attack on the Tuileries palace.¹⁹⁰ The executions may have appealed to sans-culottes bent on punishing the aristocrats of France. Two contemporary documents from that time, however, tell us more about the effect the executions in the Place du Carrousel had upon ordinary people in Paris.

Even the enthusiastic revolutionary Louis-Marie Prudhomme accepted the detrimental impact of the executions in the Place du Carrousel. Prudhomme described the executions in the *Revolutions de Paris* of April 20-27, 1793. Prudhomme argued that forcing prisoners to partially disrobe in public and have their hands and hair bound before being strapped to a board and decapitated, the same ritualized mechanics of execution

¹⁸⁹ Sanson, *Mémoires*, 4: 77-85.

¹⁹⁰ Albert Soboul and Raymonde Monnier, *Répertoire du Personnel Sectionnaire Parisien en L'An II* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1985), 47.

employed by the ancien régime, “degraded the cause of the Revolution” while eliciting sympathy for the guilty.¹⁹¹ Prudhomme produced his article during the last week of April, which suggests that the revolutionary witnessed at least some of the executions in the Place du Carrousel that month.

The second document provides more evidence of the reaction of the local populace to the presence of the guillotine in their midst. Prosecutor General Roederer provided a letter to citizen Guidon, dated May 13, 1793, requesting that the guillotine be moved, citing community complaints: “after these public executions, the blood of the criminals remains in pools upon that *place*, that dogs come to drink it, and that crowds of men feed their eyes with this spectacle, which naturally instigates their hearts to ferocity and blood.”¹⁹² The dating of this letter, May 13, indicates that the residents of the Tuileries, a group that surely included some residents of the Hôtel de Longueville and the Galeries du Louvre, began organizing to have the guillotine removed weeks before.

Prudhomme reported in the *Révolutions du Paris* of 11 to 18 May, 1793, that the Convention Nationale ordered the guillotine moved to a new location on May 10, 1793, because of its “proximity to the Place du Carrousel.”¹⁹³ The Roederer letter, however, strongly suggests that the businesses and residents near the Place du Carrousel forced the Convention to remove the device. Just as important, the letter confirms that local

¹⁹¹ Louis-Marie Prudhomme, *Révolutions du Paris du Seizième Trimestre: 23 mars au 20 juillet, 1793* (Paris: Prudhomme, 1793), 224-225.

¹⁹² Croker, *History of the Guillotine*, 78.

¹⁹³ Prudhomme, *Révolutions du Paris du Seizième Trimestre*, 361.

residents held a common opinion about the presence of the guillotine and were able to organize successfully to have the instrument of execution moved.

Indeed, Soboul and Monnier contend that some residents of the Tuileries quarter participated in the attack of 10 August, 1792, but that “by May-June, 1793, the Tuileries was mostly moderate, and was firmly so by 1794.”¹⁹⁴ The Prudhomme articles, the Roederer letter, and the changes cited by Soboul and Monnier indicate that the presence of the guillotine at the Place du Carrousel provoked the residents of the Tuileries quarter to mobilize to have the instrument removed, a collective action that very likely brought different constituencies within the Tuileries into close contact.

It is difficult to imagine the artists of the Galeries du Louvre and the business owners in the Hôtel de Longueville uniting to keep the guillotine in the Place du Carrousel. It seems much more probable that they worked to have the device removed. Thirty days of crowds and executions must have seemed like an eternity to families trying to live normal lives in the midst of the horror.

The removal of the guillotine to the Place de la Révolution in May 1793, did not signal the end of the Terror in France however. Prudhomme called for “improvements in the rituals of execution,” not for their end.¹⁹⁵ The guillotine stood in the Place de la Revolution, where Louis XVI had been executed, until the spring of 1794. The families of Jacques-Florent Robillard and Carle Vernet may not have lived precisely at the

¹⁹⁴ Soboul and Monnier, *Répertoire*, 47.

¹⁹⁵ Prudhomme, *Révolutions du Paris du Seizième Trimestre*, 224.

epicenter of revolution in the Hôtel de Longueville and the Galleries du Louvre, but they certainly lived very close to the stage where many of the bloodiest dramas unfolded.

During the Terror, the Hôtel de Longueville served as a barracks for sans-culotte militia who tormented locals and sometimes forced impromptu performances of revolutionary songs and oaths.¹⁹⁶ Lerouge and Bertholot published their revolutionary newspaper, the *Courrier de la Convention et de La Guerre*, from the “maison appelée Longueville.”¹⁹⁷ Bertrand Barère de Vieuzac and the Committee of Public Safety met daily in the Hôtel d’Elbœuf before moving across the Place du Carrousel to the Pavillon de Flore in the Tuileries.¹⁹⁸

The letter from Georges-Nicolas to his cousin announcing the birth of Théodore confirms that the Géricault-Caruel family exchanged letters describing family events.¹⁹⁹ We know that the de Poix sisters were close. Marie-Thérèse Robillard left her entire estate to her sister Louise-Thérèse Caruel, as noted.²⁰⁰ We can assume that Louise Thérèse Caruel and Marie-Thérèse Robillard corresponded throughout their lives, sharing news of family marriages, births, and deaths.

¹⁹⁶ Georges Duval, *Souvenirs de La Terreur de 1788 à 1793* (Paris, Werdet, 1842), 4: 8.

¹⁹⁷ Eugène Hatin, *Bibliographie Historique et Critique de La Presse Périodique Française* (Paris: Didot, 1866), 178.

¹⁹⁸ Aulard, *The French Revolution*, 2: 240.

¹⁹⁹ Bazin, Géricault, 1: 24.

²⁰⁰ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 342.

Journalists, such as Prudhomme, informed France of the executions in the Place du Carrousel in the spring of 1793 near the Hôtel de Longueville. The press outside France reported the execution of Louis XVI that January. Louise-Thérèse Caruel knew that her son worked nearby and that Amédée-Selim Robillard and his brother, Pierre, lived steps from the slaughter. Louise-Thérèse Caruel may have witnessed the violence in Paris firsthand while visiting her son or sister during 1793 or 1794.

In his 1901 study of the Terror in Rouen, Félix Clérembray asserted that the Revolutionary authorities executed just ten individuals in the Rouen region during 1793, making Rouen an island of tranquility compared to the neighborhood around the Tuileries the same year.²⁰¹ Rouen must have seemed a much more peaceful and welcoming place to live to those seeking to avoid the excesses of the Terror.

Fanny Vernet and Angélique Robillard were both raising young children in the Tuileries and cannot have wanted the guillotine to remain. The close proximity of the Vernet and Robillard residences in the Tuileries, the turmoil in the Tuileries quarter during the Terror, and the Masonic links connecting Jean-Baptiste Caruel to Carle Vernet, present multiple opportunities for contact between the two families after 1785.

I will examine the links connecting the residents of the Hôtel de Longueville to the residents of the Galeries du Louvre in the following chapters. To understand these connections, we must first visit another site of revolution: the French colony of Saint-Domingue.

²⁰¹ Félix Clérembray, *La Terreur à Rouen, 1793-1794-1795, d'après documents inédits* (Paris: A Picard et fils, 1901), 237.

Chapter VI

The Saint-Domingue Robillards

Géricault scholars of the nineteenth century, such as Charles Clément, are strangely silent about the Robillard family. Modern Géricault scholars have examined the Robillard tobacco business in France but have made few serious inquiries into the Robillard family activities in the French Antilles. Jean Sagne makes an oblique reference to “two Robillard brothers who lived in Saint-Domingue during the revolution,” but offers little more.²⁰²

Before examining the activities of the Saint-Domingue branch of the Robillard family in Saint-Domingue and Paris, it will be necessary to provide a brief description of the Robillard family in France during the eighteenth century,

In 1750, Florent Robillard de Péronville held the position of trésorier principal de l’Extraordinaire des Guerres de Rouen (special treasurer for war for Rouen). Florent Robillard de Péronville had three sons: Antoine-Jean-Baptiste Robillard de Péronville, Pierre-Antoine Robillard, and Jean-Guillaume Robillard.²⁰³

Antoine-Jean-Baptiste Robillard de Péronville inherited his father’s title and became trésorier principal de l’Extraordinaire des Guerres de Rouen. He married Marie-Catherine-Josèphe Bouchelet and produced five children: Marie-Josèphe-Scholastique

²⁰² Sagne, *Géricault*, 210.

²⁰³ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 342.

Robillard de Péronville, Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville, Henri Robillard, Jacques-Florent Robillard, and Charles-Stanislas Robillard.²⁰⁴

Pierre-Antoine Robillard married Marie-Thérèse du Poix, as noted, and worked for the Fermiers généraux in Dieppe where he learned the tobacco trade from his father-in-law, Jean-Baptiste de Poix. Jean-Guillaume Robillard, the third son of Florent Robillard de Péronville, crossed the Atlantic to the sugar colony of Saint-Domingue where he became a plantation owner.²⁰⁵

Antoine-Jean-Baptiste Robillard de Péronville and his wife Marie-Catherine-Josèphe Bouchelet produced the five children who carried the name of Florent Robillard de Péronville to the next generation. Henri Robillard fought as an artillery officer for France in the American War of Independence and died in Philadelphia on January 5, 1777.²⁰⁶ Marie-Josèphe-Scholastique Robillard de Péronville, the sole daughter, remained in France, married twice and had two children.²⁰⁷ Marie-Josèphe-Scholastique is an interesting individual who held a substantial amount of stock in the Bank of France.²⁰⁸

Jacques-Florent Robillard went into the tobacco business with his uncle and his brother-in-law, as noted. The two other brothers, Charles-Stanislas Robillard and Louis-

²⁰⁴ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 342-345.

²⁰⁵ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 343.

²⁰⁶ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 345.

²⁰⁷ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 343.

²⁰⁸ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 343.

Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville, followed Jean-Guillaume Robillard, their uncle, to the French colony of Saint-Domingue.²⁰⁹

In 1790, the French colony of Saint-Domingue in the French Antilles was one of the richest colonies in the Caribbean and imported huge numbers of slaves to work the sugar and coffee plantations of the island.²¹⁰ In August, 1791, the slaves of the North Plain rose up and murdered a number of overseers and colonists.²¹¹ Eventually, the French government lost control of the colony, despite repeated attempts to re-establish control.

The Robillard family operated three plantations in northern Saint-Domingue, owned at least part of one other, and operated a *sucerie*, or sugar-refining mill, when the revolution broke out. Their holdings were relatively modest.

Charles-Stanislas Robillard operated the *Robillard* coffee plantation in the mountains of Borgne.²¹² Charles-Robillard also served as an officer in the local militia.²¹³ Charles-Stanislas Robillard married Marie-Françoise-Catherine Roullit in Saint-

²⁰⁹ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 344.

²¹⁰ Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge MA: Belknap-Harvard, 2004), 1.

²¹¹ David Patrick Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 85.

²¹² Oliver, Gliech, *État Détaillé des Liquidations Opérées par la Commission Chargée de Répartir l'Indemnité Attribuée aux Anciens Colons de Saint-Domingue in Exécution de la Loi du 30 avril 1826*. (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1828-1834), 4: 202-203. <http://www.domingino.de> (accessed May 14, 2010).

²¹³ Généalogies Robillard, "Robillard," <http://www.genea-bdf.org/BasesDonnees/geneaologies/robillard.htm> (accessed June 22, 2010).

Domingue in 1785, the same year Jacques-Florent Robillard married Angélique-Louise Morize in Paris.²¹⁴ Pierre Roullit and his wife, the parents of Marie-Françoise-Catherine, owned a small coffee plantation in Gros Morne in the mountains near the Northern Plain.²¹⁵

Charles-Stanislas and Marie-Françoise had one son, Charles-Joseph Robillard, born in Saint-Domingue in 1789.²¹⁶ Charles-Stanislas Robillard died in Saint-Domingue in 1790.²¹⁷ We do not know how Charles-Stanislas Robillard died, but the colony regularly experienced outbreaks of yellow fever and other diseases that both Europeans and African slaves found difficult to combat. Marie-Françoise-Catherine and her son Charles-Joseph Robillard managed to survive the rebellion. In 1830, the French government named both Marie-Françoise-Catherine and Charles-Joseph-Robillard co-inheritors when the government determined the combined value of the *Robillard* and the *Roullit* plantations to be 170,000 francs, at 1789 rates.²¹⁸

²¹⁴ Saint-Domingue Le Borgne 1785, “Marriage of Charles-Stanislas Robillard,” <http://anom.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/caomec2/pix2web.php?territoire=SAINT-DOMINGUE&commune=LE%20BORGNE&annee=1785> (accessed May 22, 2010).

²¹⁵ Saint-Domingue Le Borgne 1785, “Marriage of Charles-Stanislas Robillard,” <http://anom.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/caomec2/pix2web.php?territoire=SAINT-DOMINGUE&commune=LE%20BORGNE&annee=1785> (accessed May 22, 2010).

²¹⁶ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 344.

²¹⁷ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 344.

²¹⁸ *État Détaillé des Liquidations*, 4: 202-203.

In 1830, the French government valued Jean-Guillaume Robillard's sugar plantation and *sucerie* on the Northern Plain at 500,000 francs at 1789 rates, making Jean-Guillaume Robillard the richest member of the Robillard family on the island.²¹⁹

Caroline Fick reports that the *Robillard* plantation was among the first targeted by rebel slaves in August 1791.²²⁰ Many of the slaves on the *Robillard* plantation joined the rebellion, murdered the overseer who would not join them, and destroyed as much of Robillard's property as they could.²²¹ Jean-Guillaume was elsewhere on the island on the night of the attack and evidently remained in Saint-Domingue to fight the insurrection.²²² He also served as a commander in the militia, although the exact dates of his service are not easy to determine.²²³

In December 1791, the landowners of northern Saint-Domingue elected a governing council to try to impose some order on the roiling Northern plain. The plantation owners elected Jean-Guillaume Robillard as one of the council members, a clear indication that the sugar aristocracy saw Robillard as one of their own.²²⁴ The circumstances of his death are uncertain, but Jean-Guillaume Robillard appears to have

²¹⁹ *État détaillé des Liquidations*, 4:146-147.

²²⁰ Caroline Fick, *The Making of Haiti: The Saint-Domingue Revolution from Below* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 100.

²²¹ Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*, 96.

²²² Fick, *The Making of Haiti*, 100.

²²³ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 342.

²²⁴ Blanche Maurel, *Cahiers de Doléances de la Colonie de Saint-Domingue pour les États Généraux de 1789* (Paris: Leroux, 1933), 386-387.

died in Saint-Domingue sometime before 1792, or possibly 1793.²²⁵ Jean-Guillaume Robillard had no wife and his wealth went to his nephews, nieces, grandnephews, and grandnieces, including Jacques-Florent Robillard.²²⁶

The third Robillard plantation in Saint-Domingue was *Péronville*, the coffee plantation of Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville.²²⁷ The *Péronville* coffee plantation was also located in the mountains of Borgne and was valued at 150,000 francs at 1789 rates.²²⁸

In 1788, Louis-Nicolas-Joseph-Robillard de Péronville, age thirty-eight, married a woman from the islands one year his senior. Her name was Marie-Anne-Charles de Barras and she was born in Martinique in 1749. Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard and Marie-Anne-Charles de Barras had one daughter together, Zoé Robillard de Péronville, born in 1790.²²⁹

Jean-Guillaume Robillard was the most substantial Robillard in Saint-Domingue in 1790. In addition to his sucrierie and sugar plantation, Jean-Guillaume owned several houses in Le Cap, the capital of the Northern province and the port of entry for most of the slaves of Saint-Domingue.²³⁰ The relatively modest holdings of Charles-Stanislas

²²⁵ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 342.

²²⁶ *État Détaillé des Liquidations*, 4: 146-147.

²²⁷ *État Détaillé des Liquidations*, 2: 152-153.

²²⁸ *État Détaillé des Liquidations*, 2: 152-153.

²²⁹ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 344.

²³⁰ Maurel, *Cahiers de Doléances*, 388.

Robillard and Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville suggest neither had much influence among the elite plantation owners, or the merchant houses in Bordeaux, Nantes, and Le Havre that actually owned many of the plantations on Saint-Domingue by 1776.²³¹ Marie-Anne-Charles de Barras, the wife of Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville, was the cousin of Paul de Barras, a minor aristocrat from Provence, known in his small circle for his extraordinary passions, good looks, and spendthrift ways.²³²

Paul de Barras is an extremely important figure in French history. We do not know the details of the return of Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville and the other Saint-Domingue Robillards to France, only the fact.

Géricault sketched and painted several scenes of revolution in Haiti. Géricault's interest in revolution and slavery are key components of nineteenth-century hagiographies by republican critics, such as Charles Blanc.²³³ Géricault also spoke *caraiibe*, according to at least one witness.²³⁴

Did Géricault learn the language solely to confront the “prince” of the Antilles? The more plausible explanation is that young Théodore acquired the language by spending time in the company of those who knew and spoke *caraiibe* well. If so, then Géricault's Robillard relatives, who fled the French colony of Saint-Domingue and arrived in Paris sometime after 1792, are among the most likely candidates.

²³¹ Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*, 18-20.

²³² Jean Savant, *Tel Fut Barras* (Paris: Fasquelle, 1955), 40-43.

²³³ Michel, *Invention du Réel*, 91.

²³⁴ Henri Monnier, *Mémoires de Monsieur Joseph Prudhomme* (Paris: Librairie Nouvelle, 1857), 1: 39-40.

Chapter VII

Paul de Barras, the Robillards, and the Galeries du Louvre

Paul de Barras played a major role in the French Revolution. Barras's most important contribution, however, may have been to recognize the talents of an impoverished artillery officer from Corsica. Barras provided Bonaparte with military commands and with an introduction to Josephine Beauharnais, a wealthy widow and former mistress of Barras.²³⁵ The marriage of Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville to Marie-Anne-Charles de Barras was an occasion for celebration in 1788. In 1795, this marriage linked the Robillard family to one of the most powerful men in France.

Paul de Barras was a penniless aristocrat from Provence in 1789.²³⁶ As a Marseille Jacobin, Barras possessed impeccable republican credentials. Barras did not get along with Robespierre and his allies, however. On 9 Thermidor of *An II* (July 27, 1794), Barras commanded the troops that sent Robespierre, Saint-Just, and other key terrorists to the guillotine.²³⁷ Barras released many of the prisoners held by the Revolutionary Tribunal, visited the child Louis XVII in the Temple, and won the reputation as a moderate among the general population.²³⁸

²³⁵ Savant, *Barras*, 154-166.

²³⁶ Savant, *Barras*, 54-59.

²³⁷ Savant, *Barras*, 91.

²³⁸ *Penny Cyclopaedia of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge* (London: G Knight, 1835), 3: 494.

Paul de Barras cemented his hold on power by defending the Convention against several insurrections, the most notable of which was the reactionary attack on the Tuileries on 13 Vendémiaire of *An IV* (October 5, 1795). Barras selected Bonaparte to command the artillery. Bonaparte placed his cannon at strategic points near the Hôtel de Longueville and the Place du Carrousel and decimated the waves of National Guardsmen and royalists trying to storm the Tuileries.²³⁹ Bonaparte's experience watching the August 10 assault from the Hôtel de Longueville three years before doubtless helped Napoléon organize a more effective defense than the one mounted by the troops of Louis XVI.

The victory ensured Barras a place on the Directory, the five-seat executive that ruled France from 1795 until Napoléon's coup in 1799. Barras was the only member of the Directory to maintain his seat on the executive from inception to dissolution and was arguably the most powerful man in France during these years.

Paul de Barras is an important figure for Géricault scholars for several reasons. Director Barras connected the Robillards to the most powerful individuals in France. Romuald Szramkiewicz suggests that the Robillard firm may have benefited from the patronage of Paul de Barras.²⁴⁰ Second, the ascent of Barras meant that the Saint-Domingue Robillards enjoyed a place of enormous influence within the Robillard family structure in Paris. Third, Paul de Barras promoted his own vision of the arts in France, a vision that had a direct influence on the artists of the Galeries du Louvre.

²³⁹ Savant, *Barras*, 135-141.

²⁴⁰ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 344.

Jean Savant reports that most of the official documents detailing the relationship between Barras and Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville were destroyed by fire in 1871.²⁴¹ Savant, however, does provide evidence placing Paul de Barras in the Paris home of Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville and Marie-Anne-Charles de Barras in the spring of 1800.²⁴² Jacques-Florent Robillard, Pierre-Antoine Robillard and the other members of the Robillard family in Paris, certainly knew of the marriage of Louis-Nicolas-Joseph and Marie-Anne-Charles and of all the other Robillard marriages, births, and deaths in Saint-Domingue.

We have seen how Georges-Nicholas Géricault shared the news of Théodore's birth with his cousin. We can assume that Marie-Thérèse Robillard knew of the death of her brother-in-law, Jean-Guillaume Robillard, in Saint-Domingue and of the destruction of the *Robillard* plantation in 1791. Louise-Thérèse Caruel almost certainly learned of Robillard family events from her only sister. We need also recall that Jean-Baptiste Caruel was a full partner in the Robillard family firm. A marriage connecting the Robillards to a member of the Directory would hardly go unnoticed.

Would the extended Robillard-Caruel family and their ambitious and upwardly mobile associates conceal their connection to Director Barras after 1795? It seems far more likely that the Robillard partners and family members celebrated the Barras-Robillard connection and did all they could to benefit socially and materially from the marriage of Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville and Marie-Anne-Charles de

²⁴¹ Savant, *Barras*, 410.

²⁴² Savant, *Barras*, 278-279.

Barras. The patronage of Barras also likely made it much easier for Pierre-Antoine and Jacques-Florent Robillard to attract powerful partners from outside the family, such as Bernard Delaître and the Chapelain brothers.

The ascent of Barras almost certainly transformed the status of Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville among the Robillards based around the Hôtel de Longueville. Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville and Charles-Stanislas Robillard had been minor figures among the plantation owners of Saint-Domingue. The family connection of Marie-Anne-Charles to Paul de Barras made the Saint Domingue Robillards important figures within the extended Robillard family for as long as Paul de Barras remained in power and probably after.

Georges-Nicolas Géricault moved his family to Paris precisely as the importance of the Saint-Domingue Robillards in Paris likely began to increase. Jacques-Florent Robillard had to know that his sister-in-law was the cousin of Paul de Barras. Indeed, we can be reasonably sure that every member of the extended Robillard-Caruel-De Poix family knew of the family connection to the Directory.

Géricault scholars have struggled to explain the timing and reasons behind the Géricault move from Rouen in late 1795, or early 1796. Jean Sagne argued that war with Britain and the war in Saint-Domingue depressed maritime commerce, forcing Georges-Nicolas Géricault to move to Paris.²⁴³ Albert Boime suggested that famine and political

²⁴³ Sagne, *Géricault*, 21.

upheavals in Rouen prompted the Géricault family to relocate to Paris in the winter of 1795.²⁴⁴

Famine may have been a factor in the Géricault move to Paris. However, general population movement during the revolution has most moving in the opposite direction. Louis Bergeron argues that the population of Paris decreased by 100,000 between the years 1791 to 1800.²⁴⁵ The proximity of the Robillard family residences in the Hôtel de Longueville and the Faubourg Saint-Germain to the guillotine in the Place du Carrousel and the Place de la Révolution, and to the Tuileries Palace, made any move to Paris highly undesirable as long as Robespierre ruled France.

The execution of Robespierre in 1794 and the defeat of the reactionaries in the fall of 1795 provided a welcome measure of stability to France and to Paris, in particular. Paul de Barras played a key role in both actions. After 1795, the Robillard family could rely on Director Barras for patronage and protection. Barras may not have actually acted specifically on the Robillards' behalf. He likely didn't need to. Few would want to risk incurring the enmity of so powerful a man by slighting a member of his family.

This thesis argues that the Hôtel de Longueville served as the center for the Robillard family and business interests in Paris and that Théodore Géricault played with his Robillard cousins Amédée-Selim and Pierre in the home of Jacques-Florent Robillard in the Hôtel de Longueville. It follows that Jacques-Florent Robillard also welcomed Zoé

²⁴⁴ Albert Boime, *Art in an Age of Counterrevolution: 1815-1848* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 117.

²⁴⁵ Bergeron, "Banquiers, Négotiants et Manufacturiers Parisiens du Directoire à L'Empire," 4.

Robillard de Péronville and Charles-Joseph Robillard into his home at the Hôtel de Longueville once the Saint-Domingue Robillards returned to Paris.

The Robillard residences in the Hôtel de Longueville and on the rue Belle Chasse were likely open to all the Robillard-Caruel grandchildren. Pierre Robillard was the eldest. Charles-Joseph Robillard acquired the family nickname of “Selim,” which may be a coincidence or evidence that he and Amédée-Selim were close.²⁴⁶

Géricault produced a number of paintings and sketches set in around Saint-Domingue. Géricault scholars date the painter’s interest in the island colony to his contact with the circle of *demi-soldes* who had fought to regain control of Saint-Domingue and gathered in the studio of Horace Vernet after 1815, most notably Colonel Bro.²⁴⁷ Géricault’s ability to speak caraibe, however, and the importance of the Saint-Domingue Robillards to the Robillard family business suggest a much earlier and more personal connection to the revolution in Saint-Domingue.

The policies of Paul de Barras had a profound effect on the arts of France. The artists of the Galeries du Louvre had suffered greatly under the dictatorship of Robespierre.²⁴⁸ From 1789 on, the residents of the Galeries du Louvre artists made a concerted effort to reach beyond their enclave and build relations with their neighbors. Several artists fought in Flanders or the Vendée. In 1789, the wives of a number of

²⁴⁶ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 344.

²⁴⁷ Chenique, “Les Cercles Politiques de Géricault (1791-1824),” 394-396.

²⁴⁸ Merson, “Les Logements d’Artistes au Louvre,” 24: 279.

prominent artists contributed their jewelry to the Convention. They also made shirts for the soldiers and set up tables to provide “fraternal” meals on the rue des Orties.²⁴⁹

In 1793, the Convention abolished the Academy and appointed Jacques-Louis David to organize the creation of a new kind of art, one that would reflect the new Republic of France.²⁵⁰ Pierre Laurent petitioned the new minister of the Interior, Dominique-Joseph Garat, for permission to continue with his plan to copy the paintings now in the national collection and won approval from the minister.²⁵¹ The plan to transform the top floor of the Galeries du Louvre into a museum open to the public came to fruition when the doors to the partially completed gallery opened on August 10, 1793.²⁵² As noted, however, the Galeries du Louvre had strong connections to royalty and the aristocracy. Its pedigree remained one of elitism, patronage, and privilege that dated to 1600.

The tension between revolutionaries and the royal artists, such as Hubert Robert, came to a head on October 3, 1793, when Robert and a number of others were arrested.²⁵³ The majority of the residents of the Galeries du Louvre had received most of their

²⁴⁹ Merson, “Les Logements d’Artistes au Louvre,” 24: 285.

²⁵⁰ Anne L. Schroeder, “Re-Assessing Fragonard’s Later Years: The Artist’s Nineteenth-Century Biographers, the Rococo, and the French Revolution,” in *Art and Culture in the Eighteenth Century: New Dimensions and Multiple Perspectives*, ed. Elise Goodman (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2001), 48.

²⁵¹ George D. Mc Kee, “Collection Publique et Droit de Reproduction. Les Origines de la Chalcographie du Louvre,” trans. Jeanne Bouniort *Revue de l’Art* 1 (1992): 58-59.

²⁵² *Louvre de Hubert Robert*, 8.

²⁵³ *Louvre de Hubert Robert*, 8.

commissions from the crown, the aristocracy, and the church and, therefore, found few patrons under David's dictatorship.²⁵⁴ Key members of the revolutionary artistic establishment, such as Lebrun and Fragonard, opposed granting Pierre Laurent the exclusive right to reproduce the paintings in the national collection and Laurent evidently lost his workspace inside the Louvre.²⁵⁵

Jean-Baptiste Régnault, who lived at 6 Rue des Orties with his wife and three children, openly supported Jacques-Louis David and the Terror.²⁵⁶ As a result, many of the residents of the Tuileries quarter and the Galeries du Louvre ostracized Régnault and his wife and cursed them openly in the streets, especially after the fall of Robespierre.²⁵⁷

The Vernet family escaped the Galeries du Louvre during the assault on the Tuileries of August 10, 1792, but suffered particular hardships under the dictatorship of David. In 1794, revolutionary authorities arrested Vernet's younger sister, Marguerite-Emilie-Félicité and her friend, Madame Filleul, for communicating with the émigrés, and other invented crimes.²⁵⁸ The women had recently attended a wedding conducted by a non-juring priest on the outskirts of Paris in violation of Revolutionary law.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁴ Merson, "Les Logements d'Artistes au Louvre," 24: 285-287.

²⁵⁵ Mc Kee, "Collection Publique," 58-59.

²⁵⁶ Merson, "Les Logements d'Artistes au Louvre," 24: 279.

²⁵⁷ Merson, "Les Logements d'Artistes au Louvre," 24: 279-80.

²⁵⁸ Charles Vatal, *Charlotte de Corday et les Girondins* (Paris: H. Plon, 1872), 821.

²⁵⁹ Léon Lagrange, *Les Vernet: Joseph Vernet et la Peinture au XVIIIe Siècle* (Paris: Didier, 1864), 264.

Marguerite-Emilie-Félicité Vernet married Jean-François Chalgrin, one of the most respected architects in the Academy of the ancien régime. Chalgrin was closely tied to the royal family and fled France with his royal patrons before the massacres of 1792.²⁶⁰

Vernet, Chalgrin, and David belonged to the Academy before the revolution and Vernet evidently considered David a friend. When Carle Vernet learned of Emilie-Félicité's arrest, he went to Jacques-Louis David for help.²⁶¹ As noted, Jacques-Louis David was an enormously important figure among the Jacobins and worked closely with Robespierre and Marat. Moreover, David knew Emilie-Félicité and her husband, Chalgrin, well.

David refused to help. According to Eugène de Mirecourt, Horace Vernet asserted that when Carle Vernet, his father, confronted David in his studio, David replied that he was busy painting *Brutus*, that Emilie-Félicité was an aristocrat, and that the decisions of the Revolutionary Tribunal were just.²⁶²

The Revolutionary Tribunal guillotined Emilie-Félicité and a number of her associates on July 24, 1794, three days before Barras and his troops arrested Robespierre, Jacques-Louis David, and the other leading terrorists.²⁶³ Olivier Merson, in his 1863 biography of Horace Vernet, claimed the Vernet family believed David to be responsible

²⁶⁰ Lagrange, *Les Vernet*, 263-264.

²⁶¹ Lagrange, *Les Vernet*, 264.

²⁶² Eugène de Mirecourt, *Horace Vernet* (Paris: Roret, 1855), 19.

²⁶³ Sanson, *Mémoires*, 5: 507.

for the original arrest because Emilie-Félicité had rebuffed David's amorous advances.²⁶⁴ On June 20, 1794, le Comité de Sureté générale dispatched one of its agents, "citoyen Blache," to look for evidence of violations of Revolutionary law, a commission that led to the arrest of "la femme Chalgrin" five days later.²⁶⁵

Carle Vernet tried to provoke David into a duel several times after.²⁶⁶ In 1863, Olivier Merson argued that the Vernet family hatred of David extended several generations.²⁶⁷ Chenique reminds us that Vernet and Jean-Baptiste Caruel belonged to the same Masonic Lodge.²⁶⁸ Carle Vernet clearly made every effort to save his sister during the weeks leading up to her execution. We do not know if Vernet sought help from the Robillards, but we can be certain that Vernet bore a certain measure of gratitude to those, like Barras, who deposed Robespierre and ended the Terror.

²⁶⁴ Olivier Merson, "Artistes Contemporains: Horace Vernet," *Revue Contemporaine* 66 (1863): 558.

²⁶⁵ Casimir Stryiński, *Deux Victimes de la Terreur, la princesse Rosalie Lubomirska, Madame Chalgrin* (Paris: Girard et Villerelle, 1899), 159.

²⁶⁶ Mirecourt, *Horace Vernet*, 19-20.

²⁶⁷ Merson, *Revue Contemporaine* 66 (1863): 558.

²⁶⁸ Chenique, "Les Cercles Politiques de Géricault (1791-1824)," 57.

Chapter VIII

Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville and the *Musée Français*

Paul de Barras played a key role in the artistic development of Théodore Géricault, in large part, because of Barras's family ties to Pierre Laurent. Romuald Szramkiewicz claims that Pierre Laurent was a relative of Marie-Anne-Charles de Barras and, thus, some sort of-in-law to Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville.²⁶⁹ We know very little about the Laurent-Barras relationship. The historical record clearly suggests, however, that Pierre Laurent's fortunes improved dramatically after Barras deposed Robespierre in 1794.

George D. Mc Kee provides an excellent summary of Laurent's activities before and after Thermidor.²⁷⁰ On November 1, 1794, after the fall of Robespierre, Laurent expanded upon his original petition and requested permission to reproduce all the objets d'art in the national collection, not just the paintings.²⁷¹ Mc Kee confirms that the engravers of Paris signed a petition to see the Directory provide funds for the Laurent catalogue and that Barras supported the idea of a much more robust engraving industry.²⁷²

Laurent succeeded, despite continued opposition from Lebrun and Fragonard. On June 14, 1795, the Comité d'instruction publique granted Laurent the exclusive right to reproduce the paintings in the national collection on the condition that Laurent employ

²⁶⁹ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 344-345.

²⁷⁰ Mc Kee, "Collection Publique," 54-65.

²⁷¹ Mc Kee, "Collection Publique," 57-59.

²⁷² Mc Kee, "Collection Publique," 58-62.

the ablest artists and engravers for the project.²⁷³ Eventually, Laurent won the right to reproduce all the objects in the collection. Reproducing the paintings called for the employment of a large number of engravers inside the Louvre and Laurent received instructions to set up an atelier there on September 29, 1795.²⁷⁴ Despite winning support for his project and workspace within the Louvre, Laurent had difficulty obtaining funds for his catalogue, which involved producing an enormous number of engravings at considerable expense.²⁷⁵

Laurent's struggle to raise capital for the catalogue continued until 1802, when Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville agreed to fund the project. It is not clear why Robillard de Péronville decided to join with Laurent, a relative of his wife, at this particular time. The decision may very likely have had something to do with the terms of the Peace of Amiens signed in March of 1802. The treaty ended Napoléon's wars and left France in possession of many of Europe's most esteemed works of art, stolen from Holland and Italy during the preceding years. Peace would bring rich visitors flocking to the greatest collection of art in the world.

Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville and Pierre Laurent formed a society to produce the catalogue of engravings of the national treasures of France in March of

²⁷³ Mc Kee, "Collection Publique," 59.

²⁷⁴ Yveline Cantarel-Besson, *La Naissance du Musée du Louvre* (Paris: Editions de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1981), 1: 242-243.

²⁷⁵ Mc Kee, "Collection Publique," 58-62.

1802.²⁷⁶ Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard initially invested 150,000 francs, and Pierre Laurent put up engravings valued at 50,000 francs, to form their partnership in 1802.²⁷⁷

The project continued over a number of years as the collection of the museum expanded under the rule of Napoléon. In 1806, Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville presented a copy of his four-volume work, *Musée Français*, to the Emperor.²⁷⁸ The Robillard de Péronville-Laurent work won praise throughout the nineteenth-century. In 1810, Charles Paul Landon praised the *Musée Français* as the best collection of art in France in print.²⁷⁹

Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville, then, lived and worked at the very center of the art world in Paris from 1802 until his death in 1809. Montfort, Blanc, and our other nineteenth-century witnesses make no mention of any of the Robillards. Jean-Baptiste Caruel and Jacques-Florent Robillard may well have patronized the arts, but even their combined activities do not compare with those of Robillard de Péronville, who dedicated much of his fortune to the business of producing art for the final seven years of his life, precisely as Géricault's skills as a copier and artist developed and matured.

Népomucène Lemercier, the French dramatist, offers a scintillating glimpse of the Robillard de Péronville social world during the First Empire. In the following passage,

²⁷⁶ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 344.

²⁷⁷ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 344-345.

²⁷⁸ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 345.

²⁷⁹ Charles Paul Landon and Vincenzo Giustiniani, *Annales du Musée et de l'École Moderne des Beaux-Arts*, 25 (Paris: Imprimerie de Chaigneau Aîné, 1810), 113.

Lemercier describes how he first met the young opera singer, Agathe-Jacqueline Maillard, after a party at the home of Mme Robillard:

Chance placed me in the public carriage traveling from Paris to Corbeil. I was returning from chez Mme. Robillard, the sister-in-law of M. Robillard, the tobacco Robillard, as he was called. There I had encountered Chérubini, Pæer, Catel, Isabey, Gérard, and a mob of celebrities. Mlle. Maillard was sitting in the corner of the same car, silent and pensive.²⁸⁰

Lemercier does not provide a date for the glittering party at the home of Mme. Robillard. We can get a strong sense of who belonged to the Robillard de Péronville social circle and what their lives must have been like from the guests Lemercier identifies by name. The list suggests the party occurred in late 1807 or early 1808.

Jean-Baptiste Isabey was one of the leading painters of miniatures during the ancien régime and the First Empire. Théodore Géricault knew Jean-Baptiste Isabey and developed a strong friendship with his son, Eugene. One of the few surviving Géricault letters we possess is from Géricault to Eugene dating to around 1823.²⁸¹ François Gérard was one of the most important and influential painters in France. Chérubini, Pæer, and Catel were among the most important musicians in France.

Lemercier describes the role he played in advancing the career of Agathe-Jacqueline Maillard. Agathe-Jacqueline Maillard enjoyed a very brief career as an opera singer and dancer in Paris between 1806 and her death in 1813.²⁸² After the chance

²⁸⁰ Louis François Hilarion Audibert, *Indiscrétions et Confidences: Souvenirs du Théâtre et de la Littérature* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1858), 55.

²⁸¹ Chenique, “Les Cercles Politiques de Géricault (1791-1824),” 581.

²⁸² Léon Lanzac de Laborie, *Paris Sous Napoléon: Théâtre Français* (Paris: Plon, 1911), 103.

meeting with Maillard after the Robillard party, Lemercier visited his friend Talma Achille, manager of the *Théâtre Français*.²⁸³ Lemercier arranged for Maillard to meet Talma.

Ferdinand Pärer was an important European composer and widely recognized for his work in Dresden, where he resided until he moved to Paris, in 1807, at Napoléon's request.²⁸⁴ The *Mercure* reviewed Maillard's debut in the role of *Hermione* in the Talma production of *Andromaque* in June of 1808.²⁸⁵ If Lemercier is correct about the presence of Pärer at the Robillard-Péronville party, then we can date the event to late 1807 or 1808. The Robillard-Péronville social circle, then, was comprised of a "mob of celebrities" that included many of the leading artists and composers in France. Pierre Laurent, the partner of Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville and a member of the artistic establishment, very likely met many of the same painters, engravers, and celebrities over the course of his own long career.²⁸⁶

Work continued on the *Musée Français*, also known for a time as the *Musée Napoléon*, until 1824, long after both principals died. The *Musée Français* reproduced the most important paintings, sculpture, drawings, and medals in France. For seven years, Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville employed many of the finest engravers in

²⁸³ Audibert, *Indiscrétions et confidences*, 55-57.

²⁸⁴ Émile Marco de Saint-Hillaire, *Mémoires d'un Page de la Cour Impériale: 1804-1815* (Paris: Boulé, 1847), 516.

²⁸⁵ *Mercure de France*, June 18, 1808, Literature, Sciences et Arts.

²⁸⁶ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 344.

France, including Carle Vernet's father-in-law, Jean-Michel Moreau, who produced the title page engravings for two volumes of the catalogue.²⁸⁷

The resumption of hostilities between France and Britain and anti-French opinion in Europe meant that Robillard de Péronville and Laurent could not effectively market the *Musée Français* to Europe's elite, the target market for the work. The cost of employing a small army of engravers to produce the plates for the *Musée Français* in Laurent's atelier grew faster than sales. The total cost of producing the work eventually approached one million francs.²⁸⁸ As a result, Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville lost the better part of his fortune supporting the engravers and artists of France.²⁸⁹

If we view Carle Vernet's decision to accept Théodore Géricault as a student simply as a form of repayment to Robillard de Péronville by Vernet on behalf of the artistic community of the Galeries du Louvre and his father-in-law, Moreau, Géricault's year or two with Vernet must rank as some of the most expensive art lessons in history.

The immense financial and personal cost of the *Musée* project to Robillard de Péronville certainly helps explain, in part, George-Nicolas Géricault's antipathy towards artists, if the reports of George-Nicolas Géricault's objections to Théodore's career

²⁸⁷ MM. A.V. Arnault, A. Jay, E Jouy, J. Norvins et Autres Hommes des Lettres, *Biographie Nouvelle des Contemporains ou Dictionnaire Historique et Raisonné de Tous les Hommes Qui, Depuis la Révolution Française, ont Acquis de la Célébrité par Leurs Actions, Leurs Écrits, Leurs Erreurs ou Leurs Crimes, Soit en France, Soit Dans les Pays Étrangers* (Paris: La Librairie Historique, 1824), 14: 128.

²⁸⁸ Frédéric Clarac, *Musée de sculpture antique et moderne*, III (Paris: Imprimerie National, 1850), cccxxix.

²⁸⁹ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 345.

choice are actually true. As a keen investor himself and treasurer of the Robillard firm, George-Nicholas Géricault must have been appalled watching Robillard de Péronville throw away a fortune on this unprofitable endeavor, while his own wealth and that of the Robillard partners grew steadily during the same period.²⁹⁰

The immense flow of monies from Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville to the engravers of Paris from 1802 to 1809 compels us to recall Régis Michel's skepticism about accounts of Théodore's "spontaneous genius." In 1836, Théodore Lebrun asserted that Géricault drew and sketched proficiently at fifteen: "we were stunned at the accuracy and quality of his copies."²⁹¹

Théodore could easily have received formal or informal lessons from Vernet or other artists of the Galeries du Louvre anytime after Robillard de Péronville began funding the *Musée Français* project in 1802, and possibly even before. Early instruction from some master engraver would certainly help explain Théodore's impressive early aptitude for copying and sketching, an ability Le Brun claims Géricault possessed prior to entering the Lycée Impérial in 1806. Théodore Géricault, as a talented young artist and a member of the Robillard family, would have been a welcome guest of any engraver or artist hoping to win Robillard de Péronville patronage.

We do not know when or how Théodore Géricault became interested in the arts or who his first teachers were. The location of the Hôtel Longueville in the Tuileries took Géricault past the Galeries du Louvre each time he visited his father's place of

²⁹⁰ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 345.

²⁹¹ Bazin, *Géricault*, 1: 21.

employment. The partnership between Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville and Pierre Laurent, beginning in 1802, provided the engravers of Paris with a great deal of work and made Louis-Nicolas Robillard de Péronville a leading patron of the arts.

The production of the museum catalogue provided Théodore with an excellent opportunity to learn about art. The proximity of the Hôtel Longueville to the Galeries du Louvre may have allowed Théodore to explore the immense gallery on the top floor of the building and the workshops of the rue des Orties. Pierre Laurent and other artists close to the Robillard family likely knew Théodore by sight, at the very least.

There are many reasons number why Carle Vernet might have been happy to make an exception and take Théodore Géricault into his studio. The attack on the Tuileries palace on August 10, 1792, affected all the residents of the Tuileries quarter. A year later, the community mobilized to have the guillotine removed from the Place du Carrousel. Fanny Vernet may have asked Angélique-Morize Robillard to use whatever influence she might have had with her sister-in-law, Marie-Anne-Charles de Barras, to secure the release of her own sister-in-law, Emilie-Félicité. Carle Vernet may have known that Paul de Barras was the Robillard family patron and that Géricault was part of this family. It is also possible that Carle Vernet knew nothing of the Robillards until Louis-Nicolas-Joseph began funding the production of the *Musée Français*.

We can say with authority, however, that Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville poured a large part of his wealth into the purses of the artists of Paris between 1802 and 1809. We can assume that Carle Vernet was aware of the *Musée Français* project and knew that Jean Moreau, his father-in-law, had been commissioned by

Robillard de Péronville and Laurent to provide two of the most prestigious engravings for the *Musée Français*.

We know, too, that the marriage of Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville to Marie-Anne-Charles de Barras connected the Robillards to Paul de Barras, an enormously powerful and influential figure during the Directory. Théodore likely met his Saint-Domingue uncle and cousins at the home of Amédée-Selim and Pierre Robillard. Géricault would have heard tales of revolution and bloodshed in the Place du Carrousel and on the Plains du Nord in Saint-Domingue. We can also state that Géricault's nineteenth-century biographers omit all mention of the Barras-Robillard connection and every other facet of Robillard family life, including Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville and his work with Pierre Laurent and Vernet's father-in-law, Moreau.

Jacques-Florent Robillard, Marie-Josèphe-Scholastique Robillard de Péronville, and the other members of the Robillard clan, committed to climbing the highest rungs of the social ladder, cannot have viewed the affair between Théodore and Alexandrine-Modeste Caruel, both members of the larger Robillard family, as a welcome development. Whatever the Robillard family knew or did not know of this illicit relationship prior to 1818, the birth of Georges-Hippolyte Géricault in August that year almost certainly made pariahs of all those directly concerned, including George-Nicholas Géricault, the painter's father.

The Robillards remained a powerful and influential family throughout the nineteenth century. One might reasonably expect that a serious examination of the formative influences in Géricault's artistic career might include a passing mention of the *Musée Français* and the Robillard patronage of the arts during the Consulate and First

Empire. Instead, Géricault's nineteenth-century sources offer only a mix of fact and fabrication.

We recall Clément's letter to Henry Houssaye in 1879. Clément describes a concerted effort to protect the name of Géricault's anonymous lover and that of her son. Clément also states that she was part of one of the richest and most influential families of the First Empire. Jean-Baptiste Caruel was, indeed, rich. But the wealth and influence of Jean-Baptiste Caruel paled before that Jacques-Florent Robillard and the other members of the Robillard clan.

When Géricault began his affair with his married aunt sometime around 1813, or 1814, Jacques-Florent Robillard, former contrôleur de la Manufacture de Tabacs de Paris and tobacco merchant, was Baron Robillard de Magnanville and censor of the Bank of France. The initial Bourbon Restoration of 1814 protected many of the secular freedoms that the populace enjoyed, including the right to divorce. The *Chambre Introuvable* of the second Bourbon Restoration that ruled France after Napoléon's brief escape from Elba took a much more intolerant stance towards adultery and marital infidelity.

Jean-Baptiste Caruel won the right to use his wife's aristocratic name early in 1818, at about the same time Alexandrine-Modeste discovered that she carried Théodore's child. There can be little doubt that nobody in the extended Robillard family wanted any part of the affair to be made public.

Chapter IX

Conclusion: Robillard Family Matters

The portrait of Robillard family activities in Paris from 1802 to 1808, when Théodore began painting, looks very different with Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville and the production of the *Musée Français* in the frame. I have suggested that Théodore's family and social circle during this period included his cousins Zoé Robillard de Péronville, Charles "Selim" Robillard, Amédée-Selim Robillard, and Pierre Robillard. The Hôtel Longueville served as the center of the Robillard tobacco business from 1791 to 1806 and was the home of Jacques-Florent Robillard and his family from 1785 to 1799.

I have argued that the marriage connecting the Robillards to Paul de Barras played at least some part in the success of the Robillard business during the years 1795 to 1799. I contend that this marriage placed Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville and the Saint-Domingue Robillards in the very center of the Robillard family at precisely the time the George-Nicolas Géricault moved from Rouen to Paris around 1796.

I suggest that Théodore learned to speak caraibe by spending time with Zoé Robillard de Péronville and Charles "Selim" Robillard and his other Saint-Domingue relatives and, perhaps, their servants. I contend that Théodore acquired a keen interest in Saint-Domingue at an early age because Saint-Domingue was "home" to important members of Théodore's extended family.

I have examined links that might have connected the Robillard family to the Vernet family before 1808. I contend that Géricault received formal and informal lessons

from the engravers and copiers working for Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville and Pierre Laurent. The other artists of the Galeries du Louvre had good reason to welcome Théodore into their ateliers, especially after work on the *Musée Français* began in 1802. Géricault could have met Vernet through any of these artists.

After the fall of Robespierre and the establishment of the Directory, Paris went into a state of grieving and joy. The reputation of the Hôtel Longueville did not improve much during the Directory, however. In 1795 and 1796, the people of Paris attended an enormous number of balls throughout the city.²⁹² The most exotic and popular ball was at the Hôtel Longueville, where members of all classes and races met and mingled in various states of dress and undress.²⁹³

The Hôtel Longueville retained its dubious reputation into the Consulate. Napoléon's government evidently attempted to curtail the near nudity and licentiousness associated with the balls and "pleasure-gardens" at the Hôtel Longueville, but with only limited success.²⁹⁴

In the spring of 1802, Mary Berry, an English aristocrat and correspondent of Madame de Staël, visited Paris and other parts of France as part of a Grand Tour during the brief period of peace between England and France. Miss Berry met many of the leading figures of the Consulate during her stay in Paris that spring and summer.

²⁹² Edmond de Goncourt and Jules de Goncourt, *Histoire de la Société Française Pendant le Directoire* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1855), 139-146.

²⁹³ Edmond de Goncourt and Jules de Goncourt, *Histoire de la Société Française Pendant le Directoire* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1855), 145-146.

²⁹⁴ Léon Lanzaç de Laborie. *Paris sous Napoléon: Administration* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit 1905), 133.

On March 24, 1802, Miss Berry and her companions attended a ball at the Hôtel Longueville three weeks after Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville and Pierre Laurent formed their partnership. Miss Berry gives a fascinating account of Parisian society on display at the Hôtel de Longueville.

Miss Berry describes the evening in some detail, confesses her initial fears of “seeing too much,” and confirms that the Hôtel de Longueville retained its reputation as a site of prostitution.²⁹⁵ Miss Berry describes the dance hall as “long and dirty, but brightly illuminated with hanging lamps.”²⁹⁶ According to Miss Berry, approximately one third of the guests that night wore masks, which she found annoying.²⁹⁷ There was some cross-dressing, but the propriety, dress, and demeanor of the guests did not cause Miss Berry any particular concern.²⁹⁸ Miss Berry also records the stunning effect the Grand Galerie du Louvre had on visitors and describes the immense collection in detail.²⁹⁹

A prominent Paris guide book of 1806 lamented the decay of the Hôtel Longueville, describing how the former residence of dukes had become home to mail coaches, a tobacco firm, and “un bal pour les grisettes,” or a dance for working girls.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁵ Lady Theresa Lewis, ed., *Extracts of the Journals and Correspondence of Miss Berry From the Year 1783 to 1852* (London: Longmans, Green, 1865), 2: 155-156.

²⁹⁶ Lewis, *Extracts*, 2: 155-156.

²⁹⁷ Lewis, *Extracts*, 2: 155-156

²⁹⁸ Lewis, *Extracts*, 2: 155-156.

²⁹⁹ Lewis, *Extracts*, 2: 133-134.

³⁰⁰ *Paris et Ses Curiosités avec une Notice Historique et Descriptive des Environs de Paris* (Paris: Chez Marchand, 1806), 2: 133.

As a child, Théodore likely knew very little of the activities that took place at the Hôtel Longueville.

As Théodore grew older, however, Géricault will have heard the stories, perhaps from his cousins, about the Hôtel Longueville that would have caused to Géricault to start to question the propriety of the Robillard management of this historic property. As we have seen, guides books from 1787 through to 1806 criticized the Hôtel Longueville as an architectural eyesore and home to commerce of the lowest sort, such that even English visitors such as Miss Berry knew of the unsavory reputation of the Hôtel Longueville. Indeed, the Hôtel Longueville retained its appalling reputation well into the 19th century. In 1846, Théophile Lavalée described how the Hôtel Longueville had served as a stable, a tobacco firm and a home to “un bal de prostituées” during the Directory.³⁰¹

It is hardly surprising that Jacques-Florent moved his family out of the Hôtel de Longueville to a spacious home at 42 rue Mont-Blanc, later renamed and numbered 22 rue de la Chaussée Antin, in 1799.³⁰² Jacques-Florent Robillard joined the newly formed Bank of France as regent from 1800 to 1803 and then as censor from 1806 to 1824.³⁰³ More bankers lived on the rue Mont-Blanc than on any other street in Paris.³⁰⁴

³⁰¹ Théophile Lavalée, “Géographie de Paris,” in *La Diable à Paris*, ed. by J. Hetzel (Paris: Hetzel, 1846), liii.

³⁰² Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 352.

³⁰³ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 341.

³⁰⁴ Bergeron, “Banquiers, Négotiants et Manufacturiers Parisiens du Directoire à L’Empire,” 15.

In 1800, Jacques-Florent Robillard and Jean-Baptiste Caruel individually embarked on a prodigious spending spree, purchasing expensive properties in Paris and farms and estates outside the city.³⁰⁵ In 1810, Napoléon ennobled Jacques-Florent Robillard as Baron Robillard de Magnanville of Seine-et-Oise.³⁰⁶ All the partners in the Robillard firm won titles during the First Empire or during the Bourbon Restoration, with the exception of Charles-Jacques Chapelain.³⁰⁷ The Robillards became one of the most important families of the First Empire.

The fundamental question facing Géricault scholars is simple: did Théodore Géricault personally know the Hôtel de Longueville and Saint-Domingue Robillards? Can we reasonably imagine that Louise-Thérèse de Poix did not know Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville was married to the cousin of Paul de Barras, or that Louise-Thérèse concealed this fact and the existence of the Saint-Domingue Robillards from her own daughter and her husband? Théodore visited the home of Jacques-Florent Robillard but was never introduced to Amédée-Selim or Pierre Robillard?

We have no choice, in my view, but to deduce that Clément and Dedreux Dorcy expunged all references to the Saint-Domingue Robillards and Robillard family life from their biographies of Géricault. This does not mean that Théodore spent a great deal of time with his Robillard cousins, although his proficiency in *caraiibe* certainly suggests that he did. The evidence clearly suggests that Théodore Géricault, Georges-Nicolas

³⁰⁵ Sagne, *Géricault*, 25.

³⁰⁶ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 341-342.

³⁰⁷ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 348.

Géricault, Louise-Marie-Jeanne Géricault, Louise-Thérèse Caruel, and Jean-Baptiste Caruel knew all the Robillards well.

In the Faubourg Saint-Germain, Louise-Thérèse Caruel and Louise-Marie-Jeanne Géricault would have been extremely pleased to informally claim a family relationship with Director Barras. The marriage of Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville to Marie-Anne-Charles de Barras in Saint-Domingue linked the Paris Robillard-Caruel family to the highest level of prestige and power under the Directory, and had to figure in any account linking the Robillards to Barras.

We have a variety of reasons to believe that Théodore Géricault spent at least some of his time with his Robillard cousins and that the extended Robillard families were close, at least for a period of time. The Robillard family probably met in Paris both informally and formally for birthdays and other family celebrations. Both de Poix sisters will have attended these family gatherings until the death of Marie-Thérèse in 1798.

The Robillard-Caruel families produced a small number of children. The Robillard-Caruel families, so interested in advancing their social status, needed children to improve their position through marriage. As a de Poix grandchild and a member of the Robillard family, Théodore Géricault almost certainly participated fully in Robillard weddings, birthdays, and funerals as a child and as a young man. Later, that would change.

Over time Géricault will have learned the history of the Robillards on Saint-Domingue, the attack on Jean-Guillaume's Robillard's plantation, the murder of the overseer and slaves who refused to rebel, and the burning of the crops and buildings. Amédée-Selim could not have recalled clearly the executions in the Place du Carrousel.

His older brother Pierre, however, would have seen the guillotine and perhaps even attended some of the executions. The close proximity of the Robillard family home to the guillotine and the normal storytelling of boys suggests Théodore very likely knew that the guillotine stood close to his cousin's home in the Hôtel de Longueville.

Jean Sagne argued that the violence of the Terror during Géricault's childhood in Rouen scarred the painter and affected his art. As evidence, Sagne cites the trial of Aumont, Leclerc, and other leading citizens of Rouen arrested and guillotined for making anti-revolutionary comments about the prosecution of Louis XVI.³⁰⁸ The trial and execution of Aumont, Leclerc, and their co-conspirators, in 1793, took place in Paris, however, not Rouen.³⁰⁹

Théodore's mother died on March 15, 1808. The death of Louise-Marie-Jeanne was not the first for the Robillard family that year, however, nor the most tragic. On February 2, 1808, Amédée-Selim Robillard died at the age of fifteen.³¹⁰ Szramkiewicz provides no details explaining the details of the death, but we can safely assume that the loss struck the Robillard family very deeply. Portraits of Amédée-Selim and his brother Pierre by Jean-Louis Laneuville dating to 1798 or so survive.³¹¹ They are among the only

³⁰⁸ Sagne, *Géricault*, 12-13.

³⁰⁹ *Mercure*, September 12, 1793, Tribunal Révolutionnaire.

³¹⁰ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 344.

³¹¹ Sotheby's, "Sale PF8011," http://www.sothebys.com/app/live/lot/LotDetail.jsp?lot_id=159466138 (accessed June 3, 2010).

images of Géricault's Robillard relatives in existence. Szramkiewicz reports that the Robillard family still retains a miniature of Jacques-Florent Robillard by Isabey.³¹²

The Laneuville portraits of Amédée-Selim and Pierre Robillard tie Théodore more closely to Robillard patronage of the arts. Laneuville was a contemporary of David and Carle Vernet before 1789 and enjoyed considerable success both before and after the Revolution, perhaps because of his connections to David.

Laneuville moved into the Hôtel Longueville during the early years of the Revolution and lived as a neighbour of the Robillards in the Tuileries in the Hôtel Longueville until 1806.³¹³ After Napoléon took control of the Hôtel Longueville, in 1806, Laneuville remained in the Tuileries at 16 Place du Carrousel until 1808.³¹⁴ Sometime between 1808 and 1811, Laneuville moved to 21 rue S.-Marc.³¹⁵

Sotheby's dates the Laneuville portraits of Amédée-Selim and Pierre Robillard to around 1798.³¹⁶ We do not know how much contact Théodore actually had with the artists in the Tuileries and the Galeries du Louvre. Théodore almost certainly saw Laneuville's portraits of his cousins, though. We also know that Laneuville provided Théodore with a

³¹² Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 357.

³¹³ M. Duverneuil and Jean de la Tynna, *Almanach du Commerce de Paris, Année 1806* (Paris: Chez Duverneuil et de la Tynna, 1806), 231.

³¹⁴ Jean de la Tynna, *Almanach du Commerce de Paris, Année 1808* (Paris: Chez J. de la Tynna, 1808), 225.

³¹⁵ Jean de la Tynna, *Almanach du Commerce de Paris, Année 1811* (Paris: Chez J. de la Tynna, 1811), 298.

³¹⁶ Sotheby's, "Sale PF8011," http://www.sothebys.com/app/live/lot/LotDetail.jsp?lot_id=159466138 (accessed June 3, 2010).

letter of introduction to François-Xavier Fabre, a painter residing in Florence, when Théodore set out for Italy in 1816.³¹⁷ We do not know whether Géricault met Laneuville through Vernet or had encountered him during the years that Laneuville lived and worked out of the Hôtel Longueville.

The death of his mother five weeks after the death of his cousin, Amédée-Selim Robillard, in the spring of 1808 may well have put the transitory and unpredictable nature of life into sharp relief for Théodore. Amédée-Selim was a year younger than Théodore and their birthdays were just weeks apart. Géricault may well have set his heart on a career as a painter before the death of his own mother and of Amédée-Selim in 1808. The deaths may have simply sharpened Géricault's determination to live his own life for his own needs and not to satisfy anyone else.

In the summer of 1808, Alexandrine-Modeste gave birth to Louis-Sylvestre Caruel, her first child, while Théodore was in the country with his uncles.³¹⁸ The following year was a time of transition for the extended Robillard family. Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville passed away in 1809.³¹⁹ Pierre Robillard, the eldest son of Jacques-Florent Robillard, formally entered *Robillard et Compagnie* to learn the tobacco trade.³²⁰

³¹⁷ Laveissière and Michel, *Géricault*, 276.

³¹⁸ Le Pesant, "Documents Inédits sur Géricault," 80.

³¹⁹ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 344.

³²⁰ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 346.



Fig. 2. *Amédée-Selim Robillard*, 1797-98. Jean-Louis Laneuville. Sotheby's, "Sale PF8011," http://www.sothebys.com/app/live/lot/LotDetail.jsp?lot_id=159466138 (accessed June 3, 2010).



Fig. 3. *Pierre Robillard*, 1797-98. Jean-Louis Laneuville. Sotheby's, "Sale PF8011," http://www.sothebys.com/app/live/lot/LotDetail.jsp?lot_id=159466138 (accessed June 3, 2010).

On November 31, 1809, Zoé Robillard de Péronville married Charles Vigoureux du Plessis in Paris.³²¹ Théodore and the rest of the Robillard-Caruel family will almost certainly have attended the wedding and the funeral for Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville. Alexandrine-Modeste and Jean-Baptiste had a second son and asked Théodore to be the godfather of their child Paul.³²² The death of Amédée-Selim will have cast a shadow over the year, but Pierre Robillard's entry into the Robillard firm, the wedding of Zoé Robillard de Péronville, and the birth of Paul Caruel, will have helped raise the Robillard family spirits.³²³

The Robillard tobacco firm was dissolved in 1811. Jacques-Florent Robillard, however, was a fixture at the Bank of France and immensely wealthy. During the summer of 1811 Jacques-Florent and Angélique-Louise were busy planning for the impending marriage of Pierre Robillard to Bonne-Emilie Poisalloie de Nanteuil de la Norville that winter. The Robillards must have viewed this wedding with a special sense of anticipation. The wedding of Pierre and Bonne-Emilie would provide an opportunity to end the grieving over the death of Amédée Selim Robillard. Jacques-Florent Robillard and Angélique could look forward to the prospect of grandchildren to carry on the family name.

³²¹ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 344.

³²² Le Pesant, "Documents Inédits sur Géricault," 80.

³²³ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 346.

On December 11, 1811, Pierre Robillard married Bonne-Emilie Poissalloie de Nanteuil de la Norville in Paris.³²⁴ Again, we can reasonably expect that all the members of the Robillard family attended the wedding, including Théodore. On April 10, 1812, Louise-Thérèse Caruel passed away after a long and full life. One month later tragedy struck and turned the Robillard family upside down. Pierre Robillard, newly married, died at Neuilly on May 8, 1812, at the age of twenty-six.³²⁵ Ten days later Angélique-Louise Robillard followed her son to the grave.³²⁶

Angélique-Louise survived the nightmare of the attack on the Tuileries, the guillotine, and the Terror. During her lifetime she had become one of the richest women in France. Did she question the wisdom of raising her family in the epicenter of the Terror during her grief?

The death of his cousin Pierre Robillard on May 8, 1812, coincides with Géricault's expulsion from the Louvre that month for striking another student.³²⁷ The double blows of the loss of his grandmother and his cousin may have affected Théodore as much as any professional difficulties he faced at the time.

In 1812, Jacques-Florent Robillard was nearly sixty and immensely rich. However, he had no wife and no heirs to carry on the family name. Pierre Robillard had died before he and Bonne-Emilie Poissalloie de Nanteuil de la Norville could produce a

³²⁴ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 346.

³²⁵ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 346.

³²⁶ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 345.

³²⁷ Laveissière and Michel, *Géricault*, 268.

grandchild. Jacques-Florent Robillard responded with a brutal efficiency that may have helped change the way Alexandrine-Modeste Caruel and Théodore viewed the Robillard family.

Six months after the death of Angélique-Louise, Jacques-Florent Robillard married Anne-Adèle Persin, a nineteen-year-old cousin of Angélique-Louise, on November 24, 1812.³²⁸ Théodore presented his first painting at the Salon of 1812 at almost the same time. The quick marriage did not produce the desired children immediately. Indeed, Jacques-Florent's much younger wife, Anne-Adèle, did not conceive until the spring of 1815, about the time Napoleon landed in France.³²⁹ Anne-Adèle then produced two sons in succession: Jacques-Edmond, born on January 9, 1816, and Jacques-Jules-Emmanuel, born on December 25, 1816.³³⁰

What effect did the deaths of Pierre Robillard and Angélique-Louise Robillard, and the marriage of Jacques-Florent Robillard to Anne-Adèle Persin, have on Alexandrine-Modeste Caruel? Alexandrine-Modeste was also much younger than her husband, Jean-Baptiste Caruel, who married for posterity, like Jacques-Florent Robillard. Géricault scholars generally treat Alexandrine-Modeste Caruel as a passive agent, the victim of her nephew's "monstrous" seduction, in the words of Eitner, despite the fact that Alexandrine-Modeste was several years older than Théodore when their affair likely

³²⁸ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 346.

³²⁹ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 347.

³³⁰ Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 347.

began, sometime after the marriage of Jacques-Florent Robillard and Anne-Adèle Persin.³³¹

Charles-Joseph “Selim” Robillard married Adrienne-Célestine Lepeultre de Marigny on August 8, 1818, in Paris.³³² Alexandrine-Modeste Caruel and Théodore Géricault probably did not attend this Robillard wedding. Alexandrine-Modeste was ninth months pregnant with Georges-Hippolyte Géricault, Théodore’s son, who was born two weeks later on August 21, 1818.³³³ Théodore had begun work on his redemptive canvas: *The Raft of the Medusa* that would win him the fame he craved at the Salon of 1819, even as his personal life was collapsing around him.

This thesis presents an account of Géricault’s early life that differs from the traditional narrative in significant and important ways. In the first chapter, I presented a short summary of Géricault’s early life according to standard Géricault scholarship. I argued in subsequent chapters that the proximity of the Robillard family home in the Hôtel de Longueville to the Galeries du Louvre meant that Géricault was likely familiar with the royalist community of artists, a community that included Carle Vernet.

I contend that Théodore Géricault grew up around the Galeries du Louvre and the Hôtel de Longueville. By *grew-up*, I mean *matured*, in the broadest sense of the word. As a child Théodore may have been as naïve as any other boy of six when he first set eyes on Paris. Over time, however, Théodore will have seen his world through different eyes.

³³¹ Eitner, *Géricault, Sa vie, son Œuvre*, 236.

³³² Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents*, 344.

³³³ Laveissière and Michel, *Géricault*, 281.

This process will have continued as Géricault examined his physical surroundings and the institutions of his time, including the institution of artistic authority and the institution of marriage. In time he would question the legitimacy of both.

During his short career, Géricault produced a large number of family studies and portraits, as well as scenes of violence and savagery. Théodore Géricault painted a number of images of severed heads and limbs. Jean Sagne linked the violent imagery of Géricault's art to his early childhood in Rouen.³³⁴ We can most easily connect Géricault's paintings and sketches of executions, decapitated heads, and of Haiti, to his Robillard cousins and their experiences. We can also consider the weddings, funerals, and deaths in the Robillard family when we consider *the Raft of the Medusa* and paintings on other subjects. If Amédée-Selim and Pierre Robillard suffered from living too close to the Terror, Géricault very likely understood their pain more as he grew older himself.

My interpretation of Géricault's early development differs in several important ways from standard accounts of the painter's life. In my view Géricault possessed a superb eye and understanding of art at a very early age, not simply because he possessed innate genius, but because this genius was recognized and nurtured from an early age. We need to rethink nineteenth-century and modern characterizations of Géricault as a fop, a lazy student, or as a tortured young soul driven by self-loathing to masochism and worse.

Géricault may well have been have failed to do well at the Lycée Impérial. However, Théodore appears disciplined, committed, and *pro-active* when involved in endeavors he valued.

³³⁴ Sagne, *Géricault*, 12-13.

We have no reason to believe that Géricault waited until he purchased his first horse at seventeen to begin training rigorously to be an expert rider, for example. The 1841 article Régis Michel cites indicates that Géricault actually followed a highly orthodox regimen to increase the strength and flexibility of his legs:

...to make supple and get an early start on developing his legs, according to the rules of the *Parfait Cavalier*, at night, before bed, he placed between his legs all his dictionaries and books bound together; even then, these instruments of torture were too feeble for his taste; he replaced them with a machine of iron of his own invention, which arched and made martyrs of his legs while he slept.³³⁵

The anonymous author may have been referring to *Le Modèle du Parfait Cavalier*, the classic text of French horsemanship written by Samuel Fouquet Beaurepère and published by J. B. Loyson in 1671.

Géricault may have had emotional problems at an early age. However, adduction and abduction exercises to increase thigh strength and flexibility were key components of the training regimen for expert riders advocated in France in texts by Dupaty de Clam, in 1776,³³⁶ and by François Baucher, in 1854.³³⁷ Horace Vernet and Dedreux Dorcy both attested to Géricault's impressive physique:

He was remarkably well built...his legs above all were superb...he was a man of the world; but the equal of the most glittering cavaliers of the epoch remained the friend and good companion to his humblest companions in the atelier.³³⁸

³³⁵ “Salon de 1841. – Sculpture, Tombeau de Géricault, par M. Etex,” *Magasin Pittoresque* IX (1841): 108.

³³⁶ Dupaty de Clam, *La Science et l'Art de l'Équitation, Démontrés d'Après la Nature* (Paris: Didot, 1776), 46-49.

³³⁷ François Baucher, *Œuvres Complètes de F. Baucher: Méthode d'Équitation Basée sur de Nouveaux Principes* (Paris, Dumaine, 1854), 1: 98-100.

³³⁸ Clément, *Géricault: Étude Biographique et Critique*, 266.

Géricault wanted to become a strong rider and was not content to simply rely on tried and true techniques to achieve his goal. Géricault clearly understood he would need physical strength and flexibility to become an expert rider and built a simple exercise machine to reach his goal more quickly.

Géricault brought the same inventive energy to the study of painting. In the studio of Guérin, Géricault evidently amazed his fellow students by improvising upon the assigned drawing exercises to make the tasks more difficult.³³⁹ Guérin famously cautioned Géricault's fellow students not to try to replicate Théodore's approach and observed that Géricault had "the stuff of three or four painters in him."³⁴⁰

Géricault's pro-active attitude towards riding and his willingness to engage the prince of the Antilles suggest that Géricault took a similarly aggressive approach towards improving his artistic skills. If Géricault wanted to become a painter or an engraver, then he very likely sought out expert assistance long before 1808.

I have presented an alternative account of Géricault's development that offers some alternative answers to the questions about Géricault's early prodigal talent, his ability to speak *caraiibe*, and his fascination with executions, revolution, and death.

The presence of Paul de Barras in the extended Robillard family enhanced the already considerable status and power of Jacques-Florent Robillard and made the Caruels and the Géricaults constituent members of this larger family group. I contend that the

³³⁹ Clément, *Géricault: Étude Biographique et Critique*, 29.

³⁴⁰ Batissier, *Géricault: Raconté par Lui-Même et par Ses Amis* (Geneva: Pierre Cailler, 1947), 31.

power and influence of the Robillards compel us to view Théodore Géricault as a valued member of this community, not equal in status, but still part of this extended family.

The power of Barras propelled the Saint-Domingue Robillards into the center of the Robillard family circle. Barras probably played some role in Pierre Laurent's fight to retain his right to reproduce the objects in the national collection and resist the efforts of Lebrun and other powerful figures within the French artistic establishment to displace him. The lack of funding provided the opportunity for Robillard de Péronville to join Laurent in his venture. Robillard de Péronville's money made every member of the Robillard family a welcome guest in the ateliers of the best engravers in Paris. Géricault's abilities would have been recognized, praised, and very likely nurtured.

The proximity of the Hôtel de Longueville to the Galeries du Louvre afforded Géricault the opportunity to acquire an advanced knowledge of art and of technique at an early age. We cannot say with certainty that Géricault began studying under Vernet or some other artist after Robillard de Péronville began pouring money towards an artistic community starving for work, but we must at least acknowledge that the possibility exists.

Géricault appears to have been both idealistic and naïve as a youth. Over time, Géricault matured in a community that included the best and brightest in Paris. My own view is that Géricault benefited immensely from his close proximity to the constellation of artists and composers in the Robillard de Péronville circle. Géricault acquired an understanding of the rhetorical power of images at an early age, a sensibility that makes his paintings and sketches difficult to decipher and decode.

We need to consider Géricault as part of a larger community organized from 1795 to 1806 in and around the Hôtel de Longueville and the Galeries du Louvre. It is my sincere wish that this thesis stimulates further inquiries into the lives of Amédée-Selim Robillard, Louis-Nicolas-Joseph Robillard de Péronville, and the other members of Géricault's extended family who have remained outside the consideration of Géricault scholars for too long

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