TRANSLATING THE LANDSCAPE:
EUGENE DOVILLIERS AND LANDSCAPE PAINTING IN THE AMERICAN SOUTH

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A thesis submitted to the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of Art.

Chapel Hill
2014

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ABSTRACT

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Translating the Landscape: Eugene Dovilliers and Landscape Painting in the American South
(Under the direction of Mary Sheriff)

This thesis examines the practice of early Southern artists who often adapted European stylistic conventions to render Southern subjects and settings. Two landscape paintings by Eugene Dovilliers, a little-known artist working in Columbia, South Carolina, are considered as a case study to demonstrate the various landscape traditions established in Europe that were transposed onto Southern places. First, what is known of Dovilliers’s biography is established, providing a rough idea of his whereabouts and activities which helps to determine what might have motivated him to make certain artistic choices. Second, one of Dovilliers’s landscape paintings, *View of Columbia*, c. 1855-1860, is considered as a topographical landscape that harkens back seventeenth-century Dutch landscape traditions. Third, Dovilliers’s other landscape painting, *Duck Hunting Next to a Grist Mill*, c. 1855-1860, recalls the picturesque landscapes of Claude Lorrain and is examined in this thesis using picturesque theory. Finally, the thesis concludes by determining what kinds of meanings might have been invested in Dovilliers’s landscapes. Through a close examination of Dovilliers’s pair of landscape paintings, this thesis demonstrates how artists working in the antebellum American South translated European artistic conventions into Southern settings.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to those who supported me throughout the process of researching and writing this thesis. First and foremost, I would like to thank Dr. Mary Sheriff, my advisor on this project, for her expert advice and for helping me to navigate some of the murkier areas of this research. Additionally, I am indebted to Dr. Tatiana String and Dr. Eduardo Douglas for their helpful comments and guidance. I would also like to extend special thanks to Paul Matheny and JoAnn Zeise of the South Carolina State Museum and to Fritz Hamer of the South Caroliniana Library. To Richard, for helping me to negotiate the difficult rapids and come out the other side fast and clean. Finally, I wish to thank my parents, Tom and Marguerite, for their commendable show of patience and their unceasing support during this journey.
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INTRODUCTION

On March 23, 2013, the Art Museums at Colonial Williamsburg opened an unprecedented exhibition of works titled, “Painters and Paintings of the Early American South.” Gathered into the museum’s galleries were objects that explored, perhaps more comprehensively than any previous exhibition, the breadth of art produced by artists in the southern United States from 1735 to 1800.¹ Conspicuously, of the eighty-three paintings by thirty-one artists, seventy were portraits. This intense concentration of portraits is not unexpected; patrons at this time saw portraits as a valuable tool to demonstrate wealth, taste, and social standing. Other genres, such as landscape, were not considered to be as capable of achieving the same purpose. However one characteristic is readily apparent across all genres of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Southern art: the translating of European artistic conventions into Southern subjects and places. Estill Curtis Pennington, a prolific lecturer and writer on Southern art history, has remarked that while the interest in whether there is an identifiably Southern art is an alluring question, it is ultimately less important, especially for the genre of landscape, than considering what factors contributed to the creating of such works.² Attempting to distill Southern landscape painting into visually

¹ The exhibition was curated by Colonial Williamsburg’s Juli Grainger Curator, Carolyn Weekely, who also wrote the corresponding catalogue, which covers works produced in the South much earlier than the exhibition, from roughly 1565. Carolyn J. Weekley, Painters and Paintings of the Early American South (Williamsburg, VA: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 2013).

recognizable components would, in the end, pit Southern landscape against the exceptional achievements of the Hudson River School, its northern counterpart. “Ultimately,” Pennington says, “I am not worried about the place of Southern art, but the places within it.” Likewise, the focus of this thesis is less concerned with how Southern landscape painting compares to contemporaneous works from other regions, but rather how longstanding landscape traditions influenced artists working in the South.

The subject of early Southern landscape is a topic that deserves more attention. One of the most recent exhibitions dealing specifically with Southern landscape, *Subdued Hues: Mood and Scene in Southern Landscape Painting, 1865-1925*, was held at the Morris Museum of Art in Augusta, Georgia, in 2000. Estill Curtis Pennington curated the show and wrote the accompanying catalogue, both of which considered the ways Southern landscape has been visualized as exotic or nostalgic, a “moss-hung and moon-lit world that time forgot.” Colonial Williamsburg’s “Painters and Paintings of the Early American South” exhibition included landscapes and seascapes from an earlier period, between 1735-1800. In the thoroughly researched catalogue that accompanied the exhibition, Weekley wrote of these works in terms of the past visual conventions the artists *probably* relied on. The word “probably” is often a necessarily used term when evaluating early Southern art because documentation of artists and their works is scarce, either due to an initial lack of records, or their scattering and destruction during the Civil War.

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3 Ibid., 4.

Rather than considering Southern landscape in terms of sentiment, its differentiation from Northern landscape, or its function in comparison to portraiture, this thesis seeks to establish how artists working in the American South relied on earlier European conventions to visualize southern places. The focus of the thesis is a pair of landscape paintings by a little-known artist, Eugene Dovilliers, who was born in France and was active in Columbia, South Carolina, from the 1840s until 1866. The two paintings, completed between 1855-1860, will be considered as a case study to analyze how the artist, like many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century landscape painters in the South, translated earlier European landscape traditions into a southern setting.

The first section of the thesis will establish what is known of Dovilliers’s biography. Mentions of his name appear in various texts, from census and immigration lists to school catalogues and newspaper advertisements. While many details of his personal life remain unknown, a rough idea of his whereabouts and activities is gleaned from such documents and help to determine what might have motivated Dovilliers to make certain artistic choices. Aside from the two landscape views, Dovilliers created paintings and drawings of a range of subjects. While publicly only a small collection of works are attributed to Dovilliers, it is possible that more paintings and drawings by him are privately held. A review of known works attributed to him reveals that he undertook a number of genres, materials, and styles and even created works in a series. Similarly, Dovilliers’s two landscape paintings will be considered as pendants that were meant to communicate and reveal ideas within each other.

The second section of the thesis will closely analyze one of the landscape paintings he completed in the late 1850s or early 1860s, View of Columbia (figure 1). It is a topographical view of the city as seen from across the Congaree River, foregrounded by a pastoral scene. The
painting is reminiscent of the seventeenth-century Dutch landscape tradition, qualities of which were often translated into images of southern cities. This connection is demonstrated through the development of topographical landscape imagery in northern Europe and through the comparison of isolated elements and the overall composition of Dovilliers’s painting with earlier European works. *View of Columbia* is also considered in terms of Dovilliers’s fidelity to the actual mid-nineteenth century cityscape of Columbia and the significance the work holds for the modern viewer.

The third section of the thesis uses picturesque theory to analyze Dovilliers’s second landscape painting, *Duck Hunting Next to a Grist Mill* (figure 2). Looking back to the origins of the pastoral picturesque in seventeenth-century France and Italy, and its popularity in eighteenth-century England, *Duck Hunting Next to a Grist Mill* reveals elements of this European tradition. The works of Claude Lorrain, in particular, inspired this style and it was later taken up and transformed by English artists and writers such as Thomas Gainsborough and William Gilpin into the English rustic picturesque. Dovilliers’s duck hunting scene demonstrates the Southern taste for English traditions but also reveals something of his own artistic foundations. Images of hunting, slavery, and a mill within his painting are used to discuss the ideas of leisure, labor, and industry in the early American south.

The thesis concludes by determining what kinds of meanings might have been invested in Dovilliers’s landscapes, including the significance of the pastoral topographical and pastoral picturesque landscape styles, as well as considering what personal significance the works held for Dovilliers. The two works exemplify different approaches to landscape painting, but they share visual similarities, indicating they were pendants, meant to be seen next to each other.
After analyzing them as individual works, their relationship as a pair will be considered, which will connect the two works and reveal a dialogue that comes out when they are viewed as pendants. It is the goal of this thesis to establish the practice of artists working in the early American south to harken back to European artistic traditions and then render those conventions within a southern setting. The landscapes by Eugene Dovilliers, a little-known artist of European descent, provides an opportunity for a case study to explore this transatlantic translation of European artistic practice.
SECTION I:
EUGENE DOVILLIERS AND THE SOUTHERN LANDSCAPE TRADITION

In his *Random Recollections of a Long Life*, Edwin J. Scott recalls the morning of February 17, 1865 when he was living in Columbia, South Carolina. He was “[awoken] by a terrific explosion, shaking the whole town as by an earthquake.”\(^5\) The Union soldiers were marching into Columbia and a fire was spreading throughout town. He describes the chaos of the morning, including his interactions with Union soldiers, and documents what buildings and whose houses caught fire. Contained in this dramatic recollection is a short anecdote in which Scott describes stopping at his neighbor’s house. He “went to Mr. Dovilliers’ and helped his wife put two or three big pictures in frames on her head, which she carried over to my house, and thence beyond the Female College, where her husband and his mother were in the street.”\(^6\) Scott did not describe what these pictures looked like, but the family’s priority in preserving them from the spreading fire suggests that they were highly valued.

It is likely that the pictures Edwin J. Scott helped rescue were painted by his neighbor, Eugene Dovilliers. Mr. and Mrs. Dovilliers were instructors at the South Carolina Female Collegiate Academy, later Columbia College, and Eugene Dovilliers taught French, painting, and drawing. Few works by him are known today; the fifteen or so paintings and drawings attributed


\(^6\) Ibid., 180.
to his hand comprise a disparate collection of genres and techniques. Among them are a drawing of a Native American couple on horseback fleeing distant tornadoes (figure 3); a drawing depicting a woman delicately crossing a stream (figure 4); a small painting of a doe and two fawns in a forest (figure 5); several frontal perspectives of Columbia institutional buildings (figures 6 and 7); a small landscape drawing, titled *Locks on the Broad River*, (figure 8); and the pair of landscape paintings, under consideration in this thesis, *View of Columbia* and *Duck Hunting Next to a Grist Mill*, whose titles also identify them as being scenes around Columbia, South Carolina. These last two paintings are possibly the ones Edwin J. Scott described in his *Random Recollections*. They are by far the largest works attributed to Dovilliers, measuring roughly 84 centimeters tall by 107 centimeters wide. Additionally, they are the only works by him that might be considered a pair. Aside from their similar sizes, they are also comparable in their compositions, coloring, subject matter, and are both believed to have been painted at about the same time, between 1855 and 1860.

Dovilliers’s choice to create two such large landscape views was somewhat unusual, given that portraiture was the more highly sought genre at the time. Though the two paintings work together as a pair, each was created using a different approach to landscape representation, grounded in European landscape traditions. Before considering each piece individually, it is important to first establish Eugene Dovilliers’s own heritage, and how his background would lead him to recall such earlier landscape forms.

Piecing together Dovilliers’s biography is an investigative exercise. Passing mentions of his name in random texts are strung together to create a patchy life story. It is known that he
was born in Paris between 1820\textsuperscript{7} and 1824.\textsuperscript{8} He, his parents (Michel and Zoe), and older brother (Leopold) arrived in South Carolina sometime in the 1840s.\textsuperscript{9} The census of 1850 lists Michel as a planter and Eugene as a painter.\textsuperscript{10} Records also suggest that Michel was an engineer to Napoleon before leaving France.\textsuperscript{11} The obituary of Eugene’s brother, Leopold, says that they were a “distinguished” family in France and that their name was originally De Villiers, but was later changed.\textsuperscript{12} It is possible that Michel’s connection to Napoleon led the family to leave France in the years leading up to the 1830 July Revolution, and Leopold’s obituary indicates that they spent some time in Saint Domingue. They were again compelled to relocate due to the “insurrection,” presumably the revolts and political struggles that racked Hispaniola throughout the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{13} By the early or mid 1840s, they had made their way to Columbia, a thriving city and a center of exchange.

Eugene lived with his family until 1847, when he left to become an instructor at Limestone Springs Female High School in Gaffney, South Carolina. The school’s catalogue of instructors and pupils lists him as a teacher of French, drawing, and painting through 1849.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{7} “1850 US Census: The District, Richland County, South Carolina,” Roll: M432_858; Page 78A; Image 161.
\textsuperscript{8} “1880 US Census: Annapolis, Anne Arundel County, Maryland,” Roll: 494; Family History Film: 1254494; Page: 190A; Enumeration District: 027; Image: 0601.
\textsuperscript{10} “1850 US Census: The District, Richland County, South Carolina,” Roll: M432_858; Page 78A; Image 161.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
The catalogue also reveals that he received some artistic training at an unnamed art institution in Paris. By 1850, Eugene was back in Columbia, and he started a second teaching job at the South Carolina Female Collegiate Institute, where he continued to instruct in French, painting, and drawing. In the late 1850s or early 1860s, Eugene Dovilliers married Ellen Brenan of Columbia, perhaps after meeting at the Collegiate Institute. An 1863 notice in the *Edgefield Advertiser* lists them both as instructors and as sharing the same last name: “THE SPRING TERM of this Institution begins Feb’ry 16th, and closes 24th June 1863... Mons. E. D’OVILLIERS, Professor of French, Drawing, and Painting; Mrs. E. D’OVILLIERS, Instructress in German, Italian, and Vocal Music.”\(^1\)

Three years later, an advertisement in the *Abbeville Press* informed the public that, “Monsieur and Madame Dovilliers will receive in their family as Boarders FOUR YOUNG LADIES desirous of perfecting themselves in the above branches,” referring to French, painting, drawing, music, Italian and German.\(^2\) In an issue of the *Abbeville Press* the following month, someone who styled herself as “F” submitted a testimonial to the editor:

> Mr. Editor: In a late issue of your paper I noticed an advertisement from Monsieur and Madame Dovilliers... Allow me to say, that, with others of the Abbeville Delegation, I boarded with this gentleman and lady during the last extra and regular session of the Legislator, and found them to be most cultivated and accomplished persons, with a residence conveniently situated, tastefully furnished and elegantly adorned. Monsieur is a painter of rare talents, as the walls of his rooms and chambers, richly hung with specimens amply testify, whilst Madame has no equal in music... The mother of Monsieur is also a member of his family and a lady of no ordinary attainments, assisting her son and daughter in all their labors of instructing their pupils. We believe the three speak fluently the languages, and are competent to teach all the branches enumerated, thus making the offer in fact a fine opportunity for those “desirous of perfecting themselves in the above branches.” It would afford us much pleasure to furnish young

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ladies of the district who might think of embracing this opportunity further information if desired.¹⁷

This glowing recommendation provides some insight into the Dovilliers’ family life. At this point, Eugene, Ellen, and Zoe lived together in a house in central Columbia, at the advantageous corner of Washington and Bull streets. Michel had passed away in 1850 and Eugene’s brother, Leopold, returned to Paris to study medicine, but would then seemingly abandon that field to head the Languages Department at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.¹⁸ The house in which Eugene Dovilliers, his wife, and his mother ran their boarding school fortunately survived the fire of 1865, as Edwin J. Scott recounted in his memoir, and it still stands in Columbia today. Not long after they opened the house to boarders, however, Eugene decided to leave Columbia to join his brother at the Naval Academy, perhaps due to the physical and economic damages of the war. In the Naval Academy’s instructor logs, his name appears under the French department, and it does not appear that he ever taught art again. Dovilliers died on May 20, 1887 and was buried in the United States Naval Academy Cemetery in Annapolis.¹⁹ There also is no evidence that he produced any further works after leaving Columbia, nor does it appear that he ever returned to South Carolina.²⁰

Dovilliers’s professional career, both in South Carolina and Annapolis, was teaching. He taught French to young men in Annapolis and he taught drawing and painting, as well as French,


¹⁸ “Death of Dr. Dovilliers.”


²⁰ It has been suggested that a painting by an unknown artist in the Anne Arundel County Archives bears some resemblance to Dovilliers, but the research of such a work is beyond the scope of this thesis project.
to young women in South Carolina. His shifting between disciplines perhaps goes some way to explain his varied artistic output. There are fewer than a dozen works attributed to him and included are landscape paintings and drawings, figure drawings, animal painting, and elevation perspectives. Such variety was perhaps necessitated by the need to be able to teach multiple artistic disciplines to his students. Furthermore, Dovilliers exhibited diverse abilities in treating works of similar subject matter with varying artistic styles. For example, Dovilliers completed a series of frontal perspectives of institutional buildings around Columbia. Two of these drawings, *South Carolina Female Collegiate Institute* (figure 6) and *South Carolina College* (figure 7), are both depictions of educational establishments, but how he portrays them reveals something of the way he would adjust artistic choices to suit the subject.

Though the works are dated several years apart, their function remains essentially the same: to provide an eye-level frontal perspective with, one expects, architectural accuracy. The approach is generally the same as well, with the picture plane divided equally on the horizontal axis between the sky and the institutions represented and a high degree of bi-lateral symmetry. However, the South Carolina Female Collegiate Academy is pushed closer the foreground. Our view is obstructed somewhat by a thin veil of trees and rounded white fence, but a circular drive invites us to circumvent this barrier and access the building. The South Carolina College, on the other hand, is treated with a deep spatial recession, wherein our eye is guided down the center of two rows of facing buildings, in the middle of which is a tree-lined path toward a very distant structure in the middle of the image. The South Carolina College was, by this point, a complex of buildings around a U-shaped lane known as the Horseshoe. The middle of the Horseshoe was, and remains, a landscaped outdoor space, the center of which is occupied by a memorial to the
College’s founder, Jonathan Maxcy. The obelisk memorial is seen as a small, white, vertical form in the center of Dovilliers’s drawing. In order to depict the multiple buildings and structures that comprised the college, Dovilliers needed to establish a more distant perspective, whereas with the Female Collegiate Academy, being a much smaller institution, he kept an appropriately closer view.

Both works maintain a certain amount of detachment from the buildings; a frontal perspective is a rather deadpan viewpoint. However, Dovilliers is able to impart a sense of invitation through the foregrounds. The circular drive in front of the Female Collegiate Academy, for example, not only indicates the way around the fence, but is occupied on both sides by figures moving in that direction. On the left is a woman in a dark dress walking toward the building. A small cluster of women stand on the left edge of the scene, perhaps a group of students attending the school. On the right is a stagecoach that also moves toward the entrance of the school. These stuffage figures add interest to the scene, but also indicate how we as viewers might approach the building, and, by virtue of the figures being identifiably female, specify the function of the building. A great deal of interest is given to the foreground of the South Carolina College. Clumps of figures talk to each other and several men on horseback and coaches move about. One of these men sits prominently on a black horse in the middle of the foreground and, although we do not know who he is, his erect posture and dignified clothing mark him as a man of importance, signaling the type of distinguished men that graduate from the college. Most of the other figures are also men, but two women stand on the left side with a

small boy who gestures toward the school, perhaps imagining himself among the college students and one day as dignified as the man on the horse.

While these images are only two in a series of perspective views around Columbia, they stand out as a pair that emphasize the stylistic choices that Dovilliers gave to similar subjects. Likewise, his landscape paintings provide a similar contrast in the way he approached the genre of landscape. For example, his use of figures, perspective, foregrounded action, and even foliage are echoed across the two works, much like his two drawings of Columbia colleges, but his approach is altogether different. Whereas his drawings of the South Carolina Female Collegiate Academy and the South Carolina College are straightforward perspectives, his landscape paintings are much more engaging as works of individual creativity. They stand out among all the known works by him for the subject matter and the stylistic and technical choices he employed. Where the two images of colleges were among a series, his two landscape paintings should be viewed as pendants, meant to be seen in conjunction to one another, relating to each other, and revealing aspects within each other. However, his unique approach to each, grounded in earlier landscape traditions, necessitates a close analysis of each painting individually.
SECTION II:
VIEW OF COLUMBIA AND THE PASTORAL TOPOGRAPHICAL LANDSCAPE

Eugene Dovilliers’s *View of Columbia*, painted in around 1855 to 1860, is the first known topographical depiction of the city. Over half the canvas is filled with a pale blue sky and soft white clouds. From a high vantage point the viewer looks down on cattle grazing and a dark-skinned figure, perhaps a slave or a free man, is hauling lumber to the river’s edge. This rural scene, with large trees framing the right and left side and a dirt path curving in toward the center of the canvas, foregrounds a distant profile view of the city of Columbia from the west bank of the Congaree River. Dovilliers’s topographical view blends a pastoral scene with the documentary function of a map. While this is the first such representation of Columbia, it follows a history of topographical views in the southern colonies, which stemmed out of a much longer tradition in Dutch landscape drawing and painting. Considering the historical conventions of topographical landscape may help to clarify the influences on Dovilliers’s artistic choices in how he depicted Columbia.

In early Southern art, topographical landscapes served a documentary purpose that can be linked to a longer tradition in seventeenth-century Dutch landscape. Among the earliest paintings of an American city is Bishop Roberts’ *Prospect of Charles Town*, 1737-1738, later engraved by William Henry Toms for *London Magazine* in 1739 (figure 9). The view shows Charleston’s eastern side and the Cooper River filled with sailing vessels, including small boats...
for transporting passengers around the harbor, and single- and double-masted ships and barges for hauling goods. Toms added a banner across the top of his engraving for *London Magazine*, promising “An Exact Prospect of Charles Town, the Metropolis of the Province of South Carolina.” He included several lines of text beneath the view and a key lettered A through H, identifying specific buildings and landmarks. As in the original Roberts painting, the facades of fifty-two private homes are shown, along with a group of fishermen and surveyors in the foreground. Roberts initially worked in Charleston as an independent artist and advertised in 1735, “that Portrait-painting and Engraving, Heraldry and House Painting are undertaken and performed expeditiously and in a good manner, and at the lowest rates.” By the time he completed *Prospect of Charles Town*, he was working as an engraver for the colony. Carolyn Weekley speculates that, judging from his ability to execute accurate and informative views, he was likely trained as a draftsman and possibly a cartographer. Two years after his initial advertisement, Roberts submitted a second ad, this time stating that, “GENTLEMEN may be supplied with Land-shapes [sic] for Chimney Pieces of all Sizes.” While no portraits or chimneypieces by Roberts are known, this second advertisement reveals the unique position landscapes held in the households of some wealthy landowners.

Chimneypieces, or overmantle paintings, were a decorative element situated above fireplaces, and they enjoyed modest popularity in colonial America. Though few Southern


23 For a discussion on these buildings, see Weekley, *Painters and Paintings*, 174.

24 *South Carolina Gazette* (Charleston), May 10-17, 1735 in Anna Wells Rutledge, *Artists in the Life of Charleston: through colony and state from restoration to reconstruction* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1949), 113.


26 *South Carolina Gazette* (Charleston), July 16-23, 1737 in Rutledge, 113.
overmantles are known, one exceptional example was painted in around 1715-1725 by an unknown artist depicting an unidentified manor house (figure 10). It was installed over the fireplace in Morattico Hall in Virginia, and it is unusual in that it does not depict the home in which it was hung. Usually overmantles depicted topographical landscapes based on the actual dwellings in which they were installed. Weekley suggests that the unsophisticated execution of the work indicates that the artist who painted it probably copied elements from English prints. Many examples of Northern overmantles are extant, including the Van Bergen Overmantle, from 1728-1738, attributed to John Heaten (figure 11). This overmantle clearly shows the farmstead of New York colonist Martin Van Bergen. An array of figures, including the Van Bergen family, occupy the foreground, with their home in the center, and the Catskill Mountains in the distance. The Van Bergens were of Dutch heritage, and the architecture of their home as seen in Heaten’s painting, as well as the style of the landscape itself, reveal Dutch characteristics.

The blending of cartography and landscape exhibited in Roberts’s early painting of Charleston and Heaten’s overmantle has a long tradition in Dutch art, dating back to the early seventeenth century. Briefly tracing this history reveals the initial motivations behind creating topographical views and how they were disseminated across Europe and eventually taken up by American artists. In the Netherlands, landscapes, maps, and prints were typical adornments of home interiors belonging to wealthy merchants. The interest in landscape views partially grew out of the increasing contact with foreign nations through extensive trading. Claes Janszoon Visscher’s America of 1669 (figure 12) exemplifies the curiosity Dutch people had in these

27 Weekley, 171.
unfamiliar countries. A map of North and South America is surrounded by ethnographic images of varying Indian tribes, along with profile and map views of American settlements. Far from communicating strictly cartographical information, Visscher’s map operates as a kind of concise encyclopedia. Visscher created many such maps, relying on prints by other artists and cartographers. He also created a remarkable panorama of London in 1616, documenting the topography of the city before the Great Fire of 1666. Over seven feet wide, Visscher’s early seventeenth-century view gives a detailed representation of London landmarks and is foregrounded by a north view of the busy Thames River. It was reprinted several times throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the 1625 edition, which includes an identifying banner in the sky and a key on the bottom, bears a strong resemblance to Toms’ engraving of Roberts’ Prospect of Charles Town (figure 9).

As is evident in Prospect of Charles Town and the Morattico Hall Overmantle, early Southern topographical views served to inform, amuse, and decorate. Dovilliers’s View of Columbia, while dating more than a century later than these works, fulfilled these same purposes. However, Dovilliers’s painting both documents the cityscape and charms the viewer with a pastoral scene. The distinction between mapping and pastoral landscapes is succinctly characterized by Malcolm Andrews in Landscape and Western Art: “Mapping co-ordinates cities with the rural environment; pastoral detaches the two. Mapping relishes topographical specificity and documentary record; pastoral idealizes and generalizes its subjects and settings.” In View of Columbia, Dovilliers created a hybrid view, blending a pastoral scene with topographical function. This hybridity is also seen in works like the Van Bergen

30 Ibid., 93.
*Overmantle*, but in this case the emphasis of the scene is strongly placed on the buildings that comprise the Van Bergen farmstead. The details of the city of Columbia in Dovilliers’s painting are far more distant, and the foreground commands the viewer’s initial attention. The precedence for *View of Columbia* also lies in seventeenth-century Dutch painting, especially Jacob van Ruisdael’s landscapes featuring the city of Haarlem. Though one can identify certain European influences in Dovilliers’s paintings, he makes other artistic choices that are clear departures from European traditions.

Jacob van Ruisdael’s *View of Haarlem with Bleaching Grounds* (figure 14) from about 1670, is particularly striking in its similar visual conventions as *View of Columbia*, though the initial (and ultimate) impression of the two works stand in stark contrast. As Malcolm Andrews has observed, Ruisdael’s landscapes of Haarlem “are cloudscapes as much as they are landscapes, and it is in the interaction between these two ‘scapes that the mapped countryside acquires a dramatic interest that lifts it away from performing [a] principally topographical function...”31 In *View of Haarlem with Bleaching Grounds*, two-thirds of the canvas is filled with clusters of soft, rounded white-gray clouds with patches of blue sky peeking through. St. Bavo’s cathedral and other towers punctuate the sharp horizon line while the sun bleaches long stretches of cloth in the foreground. Though Ruisdael has created what many considered an accurate portrait of Haarlem, the towering clouds and splotches of brightly lit land underneath impart this sense of drama that Andrews described. Dovilliers’s *View of Columbia* does not strike the same dramatic chord with the viewer. Rather, the two works may be compared in the use of a few key visual conventions, including similar proportions of land to sky, a high vantage point, and a

31 Ibid., 90.
distancing of the city. Another similar feature is the expansive rural foreground in which the artist has depicted an image of the local trade. Textiles were a distinct and important element of Haarlem’s economy, and Ruisdael’s inclusion of the bleaching grounds is an acknowledgement of that industry. As Andrews has pointed out, Ruisdael has “connected the city and its industry by, literally, highlighting the two and submerging the rest of the landscape in shadow,” enriching the scene with drama, but also lending it the “kind of promotionally, locally informative function that we would expect from more utilitarian sources such as regional maps, city histories, and travellers’ guide books.”

Though probably not an indication of local industry, the foreground of Dovilliers’s *View of Columbia* still serves to communicate something about the city to the viewer. The city of Columbia is foregrounded by images of cattle freely grazing and a figure carrying lumber to the river’s edge. The cattle are fat and sedate, unattended and unenclosed. The laborer, probably (though not identifiably) a slave, is strong and industrious. There is no indication of whom they belong to, but their presence suggests that while an urban center is growing across the river, an unhurried and independent life based in agriculture is still available nearby. While Dovilliers’s *View of Columbia* lacks the grandeur of Ruisdael’s *View of Haarlem*, the topographical scheme made popular by seventeenth-century Dutch landscapists is echoed in Dovilliers’s painting. Furthermore, the cityscape itself, as in *View of Haarlem*, attempts to be an accurate view of the city and is identifiable by several distinct landmarks.

One of these buildings is the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, which can be identified beyond the moss-drenched branch of a leafless tree on the left side of the canvas (figure 15).

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32 Ibid., 90-91.
Now known as the Mills Building of the South Carolina State Hospital, the cornerstone of the Asylum was laid in 1821, and it was completed in 1827. It has the distinction of being the oldest structure in the country continuously used to treat mental illness. Today the building is recognized as a historical landmark, but in the mid-nineteenth century it was also a point of pride for the city of Columbia. The South Carolina Lunatic Asylum was built with humane considerations toward its patients, contrary to the usual practice of hiding or locking them away in prison-like structures. The architect, South Carolina native Robert Mills (who would go on to design the Washington Monument), planned for the building to have a southern exposure, granting the patients access to fresh air and sunlight. In 1824, Beatrice Ravenel of the *Charleston Courier* wrote of the Asylum, “Not the smallest appearance of a prison is manifest in the building. Security is agreeably under appearances familiar to the eye in every private house. The iron bars take the similitude of sashes; the hinges and locks of the doors are all secret; so that every temptation is put out of the way to make an escape...” That the *Charleston Courier* reported on the construction and appearance of the building attests to its significance. Additionally, Mills took care to fireproof the building, an uncommon practice in the 1820s, and one that would prove invaluable by 1865.

On the right side of the *View of Columbia*, Dovilliers included another important Columbia landmark. Under the branches of the riverside tree, in the distance, is the South

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35 Ibid., 5.
Carolina State House, though the way Dovilliers decided to depict the building is somewhat complicated and calls into question the accuracy of his work and its dates. The original State House was constructed from 1786-1790. By the 1840s, the building had deteriorated to the point that it was decided that a new, completely fireproof structure was needed. Baltimore architect Major R. Niernsee began construction on the second and current State House in 1854, around the same time Dovilliers is suggested to have painted his *View of Columbia*. The first State House was completely destroyed by the fire of 1865, and with it, the State House library, which housed Niernsee’s office and his library of books, drawings, and engravings, accumulated over his twenty-five year career. Niernsee estimated the destruction of the finished marble and other materials at $700,000, but of the records for the new State House and his personal accounts, he said they “were utterly swept away during that terrible night - an irreparable loss.” At least one drawing for his plan of the State House survives, featuring a square tower on the roof. However, it is dated 1861, much later than when construction began in 1854 (figure 16).

Curiously, Dovilliers depicted the State House as having a tall square tower on the top of the building, suggesting that he either used earlier plans by Niernsee, or he actually painted *View of Columbia* sometime in the early 1860s. Still further evidence suggests that he might have used Niernsee’s plans. As it appears in Dovilliers’s painting, the State House is located next to the distinguishable towers of Trinity Cathedral (figure 17). However, from Dovilliers’s vantage point next to the Gervais Street Bridge, facing east across the Congaree River, the State House would completely obstruct any view of the cathedral. An early map of Columbia by C. Drie

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37 Ibid.
illustrates this point (figures 18 and 19). One explanation for this discrepancy is that Dovilliers painted an image of the State House based on Niernsee’s plans, using the location of the original State House, which was situated on the northwest corner of the same lot used for the second State House. Dovilliers’s choice in depicting the State House with the square tower, which would never actually be constructed, demonstrates both his resolve to include Columbia’s landmarks and some consideration for the how the city would look in the future.

Topographical landscapes are firmly rooted in the moment in which they are created. They are fixed as a static representation of a brief period in a city’s history. By projecting what the Columbia skyline might eventually become, Dovilliers effectively transcended this fundamental aspect of topographical landscape without moving into the realm of fantasy. For the modern viewer with the knowledge of Civil War history and the benefit of hindsight, however, Dovilliers’s forecasted view of Columbia seems full of imaginative hope.
SECTION III:

**DUCK HUNTING NEXT TO A GRIST MILL AND THE PASTORAL PICTURESQUE LANDSCAPE**

Around the same time Eugene Dovilliers painted *View of Columbia*, he painted another landscape scene that is comparable both in size and tonality. This painting, *Duck Hunting Next to a Grist Mill*, also recalls earlier landscape traditions, but it may be viewed in the pastoral picturesque mode of landscape painting rather than the pastoral topographical. Painted about 1855, *Duck Hunting Next to a Grist Mill* is a charming depiction of a hunting genre scene set against a landscape of a system of rivers next to Columbia. Two men dressed in hats and long hunting jackets stand on a peninsular island jutting into the Congaree River.38 The man on the right looks upwards to where he has just shot his rifle, gun still half raised. His hunting partner stands close by, rifle lowered in front of him, as he also directs his gaze towards the sky where a duck is plummeting toward the ground. A channel of water separates the hunters from a dark-skinned figure fetching a fallen duck with a long stick. Framing the right side of the canvas is a grist mill, churning the waters of the river to power the machinery housed in the adjacent building. Several of the visual devices Dovilliers used in this scene, including the pale pink and blue sky reflected in the canal that winds into the distance, are redolent of earlier European picturesque landscapes. Having trained in Paris, Dovilliers might have been particularly familiar

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with the seventeenth-century pastoral landscapes of the French artist Claude Lorrain, and the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century fondness for picturesque gardens and paintings in both France and England.

Many of Claude’s paintings are organized using several identifiable visual conventions: framing trees, a path or other device that stretches from the foreground to the middle ground, an elevation of the land in the distance, golden tones and colors that evoke antiquity, atmospheric perspective, and figures that are dwarfed by their natural environment.39 Claude’s 1648 composition *Landscape with the Marriage of Isaac and Rebekah* (‘The Mill’), for example, employs all these conventions (figure 20). The setting, while purposefully nonspecific, suggests the Roman countryside with a version of the Ponte Molle and the Falls of Tivoli in the middle distance. An assortment of classical figures, including shepherds, picnicking families, dancing peasants, and boating fishermen, populate the middle- and foreground and exist harmoniously in the tranquil light of sunset. This sense of harmony, as well as an emerging taste for his etchings and drawings, brought Claude’s landscapes tremendous popularity in the eighteenth century. His works were pleasurable, even with the inclusion of depictions of labor, as in the shepherds and fishermen, and acknowledgement of industry, as with the mill house on the left bank of the river. By blending images of labor and industry, ideas considered to be unappealing in the context of high art, within an antique and ambiguous setting of leisure, Claude’s landscapes were celebrated as purely enjoyable.

Claude’s landscapes were highly acclaimed during his lifetime, both in France, where he was born, and Italy, where he spent the majority of his life. Ultimately, however, his influence

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on landscape representation had its largest impact during the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, particularly in England. Over the course of roughly forty-five years, Claude maintained a collection of drawings after his landscape paintings, which he bound in a book titled *Liber Veritatis*. In the early eighteenth century, the book came into the possession of the Duke of Devonshire and by 1777, detailed aquatint reproductions of these drawings were published and collected across England.\(^{40}\) The picturesque qualities of Claude’s landscapes were echoed in English landscape paintings and in the modeling of English gardens. The enthusiasm for Claude is also reflected in the fervor by which his paintings were purchased by British collectors and in the eighteenth-century invention known as the “Claude glass.”\(^{41}\) His influence continued through the nineteenth century as well. The prolific English Romantic artist John Constable, known principally for his rustic landscapes, revealed his own admiration in proclaiming Claude’s *Embarkation of Saint Ursula* as “the finest tonal picture in the world.”\(^{42}\)

Claude often employed tonal qualities to unite two paintings into a complementary pair. His painted pairs would sometimes be executed concurrently and other times years apart, and the elements that linked them are not always narratively or spatially obvious.\(^{43}\) For example, a pastoral view may be paired with a maritime view, such as *Landscape with the Marriage of Isaac and Rebekah* and *Seaport with the Embarkation of the Queen of Sheba*. Both paintings illustrate joyful scenes from the Old Testament and viewing them together intensifies the visual and

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\(^{40}\) Martin Sonnabend and Jon Whiteley, *Claude Lorrain: The Enchanted Landscape* (Burlington, VT: Lund Humphries, 2011), 14-17.

\(^{41}\) Ibid. Sonnebend notes that nearly all of Claude’s paintings, at some point, were part of a British collection. The Claude Glass enabled users to look at their surroundings through a portable tinted mirror and view the outdoors as if it were a Claudian landscape.


\(^{43}\) Sonnabend and Whiteley, *Claude Lorrain*, 12.
narrative perception. In discussing how Claude used pendant painting as a way to create a dialogue between two works, Humphrey Wine remarked, “one painting can go so far as to comment on the underlying content of the other and thus reveal a new meaning to the beholder.”

The consistency with which Claude created pendant landscapes is remarkable and has remained a point of interest, especially when considering he often completed the second of a pair many years after creating the first. By actively engaging with earlier periods of his career, as well as being instrumental in developing the picturesque tradition, Claude sustained an important position in the history of landscape art throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The desire for picturesqueness extended beyond painting and into the real environment. The shift in preference from the highly controlled classical garden as was seen at Versailles to the more rustic and unmanaged picturesque garden is evidenced in Claude-Henri Watelet’s 1774 publication Essay on Gardens: A Chapter in the French Picturesque. In an open “Letter to a Friend,” Watelet describes the beauty of his own garden, Moulin Joli. He details natural canals, bridges and mills, small islands formed in the river, and flowers and trees that grow wildly in meadows and along the riverbanks. He writes about the pleasure in taking walks in his garden and happening upon unexpected views “sure to catch the attention [of] landscape painters.”

While on the one hand Watelet appreciates the surprise views offered by such picturesque landscapes, he also warns that, “to be inspired, the soul must be more closely contained; she must experience, without distraction and in a sweet reverie, the pleasure of familiar

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46 Ibid.
In essence, nature still must come under a certain amount of control to be truly inspirational.

Considering Dovilliers grew up and trained in France, it is reasonable to assume that he would have been familiar with the influence of picturesque idealizations and Claude’s paintings or engraved copies. Elements of the picturesque are as clearly seen in Dovilliers’s painting as they are rendered in Claude’s landscapes and described in Watelet’s letter. First, the two paintings can be viewed as pendants, redolent of Claude’s practice of painting works as pairs meant to be viewed in conjunction, an idea that will be addressed later in this thesis. Second, Dovilliers’s *Duck Hunting Next to a Grist Mill* clearly features many of the picturesque qualities that Claude’s oeuvre comprises and were described by Watelet. However, just as Dovilliers’s paintings seem in some ways firmly rooted in European traditions, he makes some exceptionally curious artistic decisions that are better viewed in light of Southern art-historical traditions.

Dovilliers’s duck hunting scene echoes many of Claude’s pastoral landscapes, such as *Landscape with the Marriage of Isaac and Rebekah*, with the inclusion of a waterway receding to the middle ground, a swelling of trees in the distance, a representation of industry with the grist mill, and the juxtaposition of figures at leisure and at work. A familiarity with such images goes some way to explain why Dovilliers’s work is redolent of past French landscapists. However, Claude’s landscapes were idealizations and not true depictions of real places. In his influential *Cour de Peinture par Principes* of 1708, Roger de Piles recommends how best to represent landscape scenes and maintains that, “there are five principal things which give spirit to landscip [sic], *to wit*, figures, animals, wind-shaken trees, and thinness of pencilling; to which

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47 Ibid.
add smoke when there’s occasion to use it.”⁴⁸ De Piles suggestions assume that artists should use their imaginations and include such elements to produce a pleasant scene. Unlike View of Columbia, which includes identifiable landmarks, there is no certainty that Duck Hunting Next to a Grist Mill is a depiction of a real place. The scene appears to be as idealistic as Claude’s landscapes, with a picturesque receding waterway, a rustic mill, and anonymous figures occupying the foreground. However, evidence suggests that his duck hunting scene is actually set along the banks of the rivers near Columbia and that the mill pictured in the painting is a representation of the Young/Geiger mill which once churned the waters of the Congaree River.

First, Dovilliers’s other landscapes set a precedent of where he created his landscape views. Aside from View of Columbia, his small landscape drawing Locks on the Broad River is also set along the riverbanks near Columbia, if only by virtue of its title. Given that Duck Hunting Next to a Grist Mill and View of Columbia can he viewed as pendants, it would follow that he would choose someplace around Columbia to set his duck hunting scene, rather than invent the setting. Next, the unusual framing of the scene suggests it was not a place he imagined. Rather than stand on past convention and fill both sides of the canvas with framing devices, Dovilliers places a large clump of trees in the very center of the canvas, leaving the left side gapingly open. Third, and perhaps most conclusively, it is very likely that the mill house situated on the right side is an image of the Young/Geiger mill. Although it no longer stands, the mill is mentioned in several texts, including a letter written by the novelist William Gilmore Simms, in which he describes the progress of Sherman’s troops crossing into Columbia:

The right wing of a portion of the army came up the state road, & passed through the Sandy Run Area on the Congaree, one of the most populous, wealthy, & prosperous

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portions of Lexington District. It was probably the left wing of this column that passed along Thom’s Creek through the Geiger neighborhood & Major Threewits. This latter force crossed the Saluda just below the Saluda Bridge on pontoons and over the Broad, at or near Geiger’s Mill, on pontoons also, and skirmishing with our troops began about Thom’s creek, & continued throughout their progress, till they entered Columbia.49

Simms’s correspondence indicates the mill’s location and verifies its existence during the Civil War. Additionally, Julian A. Selby describes the scenic qualities of the areas on the outskirts of Columbia in his *Memorabilia and Anecdotal Reminiscences of Columbia, South Carolina*:

> “Young’s” Mill, afterwards called “Geiger’s,” at the foot of Boundary Street, now Elmwood avenue, used to be an attractive spot for picnic and walking parties. It was the principal and oldest grist mill in the vicinity of Columbia. The old house became dilapidated and was torn down, the dam disappeared, and the Congaree rolls quietly along, without obstruction.50

Selby’s memoirs describe the pleasantness of the area and the eventual decaying of the mill. He identifies the mill’s location as an “attractive spot” suitable for recreation, lending further plausibility to the idea that this was the place where Dovilliers would have painted a leisurely hunting scene.

That the mill in Dovilliers’s painting is thought to have been the Young/Geiger Mill is further evidence that both of his landscapes, *View of Columbia* and *Duck Hunting Next to a Grist Mill*, are depictions of real locations around Columbia and further solidifies the theory that they were painted as a set. Regardless, some aspects of *Duck Hunting Next to a Grist Mill* are likely idealizations. The pleasant lighting and wind-swept trees recall those picturesque landscapes from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The mill itself is an element of rustic machinery


that is readily seen in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century picturesque landscapes. In his “Letter to a Friend,” Watelet describes the enchanting qualities of mills:

The sight of [the mill] rarely fails to attract those who have seldom seen such machinery close at hand. As you approach, you find yourself looking down at the wheel. The sound it produces, its rhythmic beat, its steady, repeated movement, all induce a few moments’ reverie. You watch with growing intentness as the paddles emerge from the current one after another, slowly rising to the highest point of their orbit, only to start down again, plunge into the water, and disappear. The wheel naturally inspires contemplation...

In his letter, Watelet articulated the meditative and charming effect of mills, which became an established motif of picturesque and rustic landscapes. Many of Claude’s pastoral landscapes, such as *Landscape with the Marriage of Isaac and Rebekah*, included mills situated on riverbanks. However, without the harkening back to antiquity so present in Claude’s paintings, Dovilliers’s juxtaposition of leisure and labor, of nature and industry, feels discordant. The grist mill and the black man, both blocked in by the canal, were integral to the nineteenth-century Southern economy and both were owned by men of privilege, such as those who took leisure in hunting. Indications of elitism have a long presence in Southern art. The visualization of one’s social rank was a driving force of art commissions in the early south.

Early Southern landscapes were predominantly plantation views painted at the request of the plantation owner or planter. Although nearly 50,000 plantations were scattered across the Southeast by 1860, relatively few plantation landscapes were commissioned. John Vlach has suggested that the dearth of plantation views is attributable to the general preference for portraiture in the South and that landscapes remained a secondary genre of painting in America until Thomas Cole’s renderings of the Catskills launched a new interest in the scenic beauty of

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51 Watelet, 71.
the Hudson River Valley. The Southern plantation views produced in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries functioned to celebrate the achievement of the planter who owned the land. Many such images focused on the plantation house, or “big house,” operating as a kind of surrogate portrait of the planter, drawing a performative connection between portraiture and landscape. The popularity of such views is perhaps a result of the perennial habit of early Southerners to model their tastes after what was fashionable in England. As Ann Bermingham has thoroughly recounted in Landscape and Ideology, landscape representations in England through the early nineteenth century expressed a continued reverence for the picturesque and functioned as a visualization of social rank and achievement. Dovilliers’s Duck Hunting Next to a Grist Mill can be viewed as accommodating Southern preferences for English style.

In 1789, the preeminent portraitist and theoretician Joshua Reynolds wrote that Thomas Gainsborough’s “portrait-like representations of nature, such as we see in the works of Rubens, Ruisdael, and others of these schools [hold a] more powerful impression of nature ... than with any works of that [Roman seventeenth-century] school.” For Reynolds, Gainsborough’s landscapes held little resemblance to Claude’s because they were images of the naturally picturesque English countryside, and hardly any invention was needed. Generally, however, Reynolds considered landscape to be a lower genre of painting. Advocates and theorists of the picturesque emerged in the 1790’s and chief among them was William Gilpin. In 1792, Gilpin published Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty, On Picturesque Travel, and On Sketching.

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55 Bermingham, Landscape and Ideology, 58.
Landscape. Gilpin called for a distinction to be made between the physical characteristics of what was considered “beautiful” versus “picturesque,” with the rough, irregular forms of the picturesque more suitable to painting.\(^{56}\) He further championed the notion that “nature is archetype” and artists should shift from attempts to idealize their environment to recording it with fidelity to the real landscape that surrounds them. In *On Picturesque Travel*, Gilpin suggested that readers seek out particular picturesque locations in the country, and what resulted was both an increased interest in touring rural England and a narrowing view of what was considered a desirable landscape. This grew to the extent that, paradoxically, landowners altered their properties to make them appear more “picturesque,” that is, more rustic with less evidence of human intervention.

Ann Bermingham discusses the emergence of the conversation piece in eighteenth-century England and the anomaly that was Thomas Gainsborough’s portrait of *Mr. and Mrs. Robert Andrews* (figure 21). While the typical conversation piece situated a family in front of a picturesque landscape garden, the Andrews chose to be shown in front of their farm. Bermingham notes that this painting operates on the “myth of the independent producer, whose own productivity ... depends solely on his own wit, labor, and capital and not on the productivity of others.”\(^{57}\) By the nineteenth century, Southern planter society saw itself as established and free from the toils of labor as the eighteenth-century English landed gentry. The plantation owners who commissioned attractive views of their estates recall the Andrews, whose “miraculous bounty ... becomes a conspicuous fantasy, and the painting reaches a state of radical

\(^{56}\) Ibid., 64.

\(^{57}\) Ibid., 30.
paradox in calling attention to the irreducibility of the very thing it wishes to sublate.”\(^\text{58}\)

In the case of Southern landscape painting, the irreducibility of the slave laborer recalls this paradox. In Dovilliers’s duck hunting scene, a dark figure, perhaps a slave, is assisting in the hunt.

Hunting scenes were another fashionable import from England, but few examples are known to exist from the southern states. Among the earliest is a pair of hunting scenes from about 1800, commissioned by a wealthy Virginia landowner, Bartholomew Truehart (figures 22 and 23). An unknown artist created two rather stilted fox hunting scenes in which Truehart is shown accompanied by a group of friends on horseback, a pack of hunting hounds, and a slave in livery, tasked with managing the dogs. Deborah Chotner has suggested that these paintings were executed by a recently arrived London artist, hoping to establish himself in the southern United States with the types of scenes he knew to be popular in England.\(^\text{59}\)

Truehart’s pair of hunting scenes functioned not only as a display of him in the action of a favored pastime, but as a demonstration of his wealth and status. Every element of fox hunting required a great financial investment: the land, the hounds, the horses, and the necessary assistance of slaves. To have a painting of oneself hunting was to have a display of one’s ability to put on a hunt. Duck hunting was a recreational option for city-dwellers because it did not require vast expanses of land or the need to stray too far from home. Regardless, it was a signifier of privilege to engage in such leisure activities and to own a slave to assist. Further emphasizing the status of hunters, Dovilliers delineated, by means of the waterway, the two hunters from two means of production on which they were dependent: mills and slave labor.

\(^{58}\) Ibid., 31.

Unlike Truehart’s fox hunting scenes, Dovilliers’s image of duck hunters is not known to depict anyone specific. The figures are distant and indistinct. The function of Truehart’s paintings was to indicate his status, whereas there is little to suggest that Dovilliers’s work operated as more than a source of pleasing amusement. The scene is likely set by the Young/Geiger Mill along the Congaree River, echoing the English pastoral picturesque tradition of looking to one’s own countryside for inspiration. The painting also reflects Claude’s picturesque landscapes with the receding waterway and the mill, its spinning wheel imparting a rustic quality. Dovilliers also fulfilled de Piles’s recommendation for giving “spirit” to his landscape by incorporating figures, animals, and “wind-shaken trees.” Duck Hunting Next to a Grist Mill is, in many of its features, evidence that Dovilliers continued to employ European landscape traditions within a southern setting.
CONCLUSION

The works that Eugene Dovilliers created while he was in Columbia survive as testaments to the pre-war conditions of the city, both in their subject and function. *View of Columbia* and *Duck Hunting Next to a Grist Mill* both capture views of the city before the fire of 1865, but they were also pendant paintings that served a decorative purpose. Though only a small collection of Dovilliers’s works are known, it is possible that many more are either privately owned, or are lost or destroyed. A February 1866 issue of the *Abbeville Press* included an endorsement of Dovilliers’s boarding school, written by “F,” one of his former boarders, who described his home as being “richly hung with specimens [that] amply testify” to his talent. This passing mention of his home’s decorated interior also suggests something of his prolificacy. Additionally, Edwin J. Scott’s *Recollections* attest to the value Dovilliers and his wife placed on his works when they prioritized saving them from the encroaching fire of 1865. Scott stated that he helped Ellen Dovilliers carry “two or three large pictures” to safety and it is possible that included in that group were *View of Columbia* and *Duck Hunting Next to a Grist Mill*, the largest known works by Dovilliers. No records indicate that they were commissions, painted for someone who specifically requested views of the Columbia area. In fact, they seem to never have left the Dovilliers family. After Eugene Dovilliers died in 1887, the paintings went to his wife, Ellen. After her death, they were included as part of her estate and were passed to her
nephew, George Huggins, former treasurer of the University of South Carolina. His daughter then inherited the paintings and bequeathed them to South Carolina State Museum in 2006. Before they were moved to the museum, the paintings hung side-by-side in her house on Blossom Street in Columbia.  

Viewing the works as pendant paintings, as they were displayed before arriving at the South Carolina State Museum, recalls Claude’s practice of painting pairs. Each work brings out more clearly certain elements present in the other and, as Humphrey Wine observed of Claude’s pairs, new meaning is revealed to the viewer. When they are positioned next to each other, certain physical and visual components make it immediately clear they were intended as pendants. Perhaps most obviously is the size of the paintings. They share nearly the same measurements, off by only two centimeters in width. Given that they are the largest works known by Dovilliers, it is likely that the two canvases were stretched to closely match one another. In addition to this physical attribute, many elements of the paintings themselves are reflected in each other. First, the tonal quality is consistent, which imparts a similar mood in both works. Both are infused with light, whose source is not located in the scene. The pink sky in *Duck Hunting Next to a Grist Mill* is suggestive of early morning and recedes to a soft blue that corresponds to the patches of sky that peek behind the clouds in *View of Columbia*. Similarly, Dovilliers employed several shades of green to portray the varying foliage in the two landscapes, but there is a consistency across the two paintings in the green tinge of the grass. Next, the horizon is constant across both paintings, giving the eye a steady line to follow from one work to the other. Both of the landscapes prominently represent the Congaree River as well.

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60 Fritz Hamer of the South Caroliniana Library conducted this research into the paintings provenance in 2006.
as varying foliage long the banks. In *Duck Hunting Next to a Grist Mill*, wispy trees occupy the center of the composition and clumps of tall grass dot the left bank where the hunters are standing. In *View of Columbia*, on the other hand, large trees frame the central topographical cityscape while what appear to be young evergreen trees rise out of the central foreground.

Another consistent image is that of the dark figure at work. Probably these are representations of slaves, and there is little to suggest otherwise. Slavery was certainly present in Columbia at this time, though nationally the institution was seeing increasing opposition during the middle of the nineteenth century. Depictions of slaves in landscape scenes was not common before the Civil War, though mostly they would have been included in plantation landscapes. In plantation scenes where slaves are included, the institution is largely benign and marginalized. In an early nineteenth-century painting by an unknown artist of the Rose Hill estate in the lowcountry of South Carolina, a solitary slave walks across the great field of the estate, but is completely dominated by the imposing and impressive big house at the top of the scene (figure 24). Other pre-war images romanticized slavery, such as Junius Brutus Stearns’s imagined view of George Washington tending his fields at Mount Vernon (figure 23). Here, Washington appears as a responsible and caring master in conversation with the overseer, while a group of slaves both diligently work and contentedly break for water. By contrast, the figure in Dovilliers’s *Duck Hunting Next to a Grist Mill* is neither shrouded in shadow, as in the Rose Hill image, nor given any personality, as with Stearns’s painting. Dovilliers’s figure is neither clearly a slave nor a free man, and he is neither romanticized nor totally marginalized. He is set prominently in the middle foreground of the canvas, with his back to us as he fetches the duck. Similarly, in *View of Columbia*, the slave figure carrying lumber to the edge of the river is placed in the foreground,
with his back to the viewer. Their presence is acknowledged, but just barely. There is no attempt on Dovilliers’s part to idealize the slaves, as Stearns did, and, because their faces are totally obscured, there is no opportunity for the viewer to empathize or identify with them. Regardless of their position, their inclusion in both works creates another element of consistency across the pair of paintings.

For all that the two paintings have in common, individually they have very different functions. *View of Columbia*, a pastoral topographical landscape, presents a distant cityscape of Columbia, rendered with precise detail and attempted foresight with the expected elevation of the South Carolina State House. The cattle and the slave figure in the foreground allude to the promise of agricultural prosperity and independence while the benefits of an urban center are still nearby. *Duck Hunting Next to a Grist Mill*, on the other hand, is an example of the pastoral picturesque. A pink sky, receding waterway, rustic mill, and depiction of privileged leisure all occupy an ambiguous, riverside setting. Dovilliers’s use of the topographical and picturesque landscape forms recall earlier traditions in Europe. Jacob van Ruisdael’s topographical views can be used as a comparison to *View of Columbia*, and the use of topographical landscape is traced from seventeenth-century Dutch artists through to some of the earliest known views of the American south. Similarly, the picturesque tradition Dovilliers drew upon for *Duck Hunting Next to a Grist Mill* has roots in seventeenth-century paintings by Claude and the picturesque theory that was more clearly developed in England and France during the eighteenth century, and Dovilliers translated it to suit his southern setting. Many artists working in the South emulated European conventions in the absence of an original regional style. However, Dovilliers grew up and trained in France. It would have been natural for him to harken back to such works as
Ruisdael’s or Claude’s. His pair of landscapes, *View of Columbia* and *Duck Hunting Next to a Grist Mill* are products of Dovilliers translating his European past into a new southern setting.
EPILOGUE

Sarah Adeline “Addie” Sims was raised on a plantation in Union County in Upstate South Carolina. Addie’s father made a fortune cultivating cotton and tobacco in the first decades of the nineteenth-century, permitting him to hire a governess to provide a basic education for his daughters. In the late 1840s, Addie was able to further her education by attending the nearby Limestone Springs Female High School in Gaffney, South Carolina. Under the tutelage of the newly arrived Frenchman Eugene Dovilliers, Addie developed an unshakable desire to study and create art. The Sims family wealth allowed for Addie to pursue this interest at Madame Dupre’s Seminary in Charleston after Dovilliers left Gaffney to teach at the South Carolina Female Collegiate Institute in Columbia. Addie’s education and artistic training was exceptional for most young women in the rural south and she aspired to continue her studies in Europe, like her teacher Monsieur Dovilliers. However, political and financial troubles caused by the Civil War compelled Addie to stay in South Carolina and live on her family’s plantation. To help the family’s financial situation, Addie carved and sold cameo portraits from soapstone. While she was never able to become a professional artist, Addie Sims produced a variety of portraits and landscapes depicting her family home in Union County. Today her drawings in charcoal and watercolor not only afford a glimpse of the artistic aspirations of a young antebellum woman in

South Carolina, but also serve as significant, if modest, testament to the educational legacy of Eugene Dovilliers.
Figure 1:
Eugene Dovilliers, *View of Columbia*, 1855-1860, oil on canvas, 84 x 105 cm
(South Carolina State Museum, Columbia, SC)
Image 2:
Eugene Dovilliers, *Duck Hunting Next to a Grist Mill*, c. 1855, oil on canvas, 84 x 107 cm
(South Carolina State Museum, Columbia, SC)
Figure 3:
Eugene Dovilliers, *Untitled* (possibly after Karl Bodmer), date unknown, charcoal on paper
(South Carolina State Museum, Columbia, SC)
Figure 4:
Eugene Dovilliers, *Untitled (Le Cue)*, date unknown, charcoal on paper
(South Carolina State Museum, Columbia, SC)
Figure 5:
Eugene Dovilliers, *Untitled* (after Karl Bodmer), 1869, oil on canvas
(South Carolina State Museum, Columbia, SC)
Figure 6:
Eugene Dovilliers, *South Carolina Female Collegiate Academy*, 1860, lithograph
(South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, SC)
Figure 7:
Eugene Dovilliers, *South Carolina College*, c.1850, lithograph by C. B. Graham, Washington DC
(South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, SC)
Figure 8:
Eugene Dovilliers, *Locks on the Broad River*, c.1850, charcoal on paper, 20.3 x 25.4 cm
(Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, SC)
Figure 9:  
Bishop Roberts (painter) and William Henry Toms (engraver), *Prospect of Charles Town*, 1739, ink on paper, 46 x 140 cm  
(Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, VA)
Figure 10:
Unknown Artist, *Untitled (Morattico Hall Overmantle)*, 1715-1725,
oil on wood panel, 60 x 233 cm
(Winterthur Museum, Wilmington, DE)
Figure 11:
John Heaten (attributed to), *Van Bergen Overmantle*, 1728-1738, oil on cherry wood, secured with white pine battens, 41.3 x 225 cm
(Fenimore Art Museum, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, NY)
Figure 12:
Claes Janszoon Visscher, *America*, 1669, 94 x 139 cm
(Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Cartes et plans, Paris, France)
Figure 13:
(Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC)
Figure 14:
Jacob van Ruisdael, *View of Haarlem with Bleaching Grounds*, c. 1670,
oil on canvas, 62.5 x 55.2 cm
(Kunstaus Zürich, Switzerland)
Figure 15:
Eugene Dovilliers, “South Carolina Lunatic Asylum,” from *View of Columbia*, 1855-1860, oil on canvas, 84 x 105 cm
(South Carolina State Museum, Columbia, SC)
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Major R. Niernsee, *Plan for the South Carolina State House*, 1861
(South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, SC)
Figure 17:
Eugene Dovilliers, “Trinity Cathedral (left) and the South Carolina State House (right),” in *View of Columbia*, 1855-1860, oil on canvas, 84 x 105 cm
(The South Carolina State Museum, Columbia, SC)
Figure 18:

C. Drie, *Birds Eye View of Columbia, SC*, 1872, 54 x 70 cm

(Library of Congress Geography and Map Division, Washington, DC)
Figure 19:
C. Drie, “Relative location of the South Carolina State House and Trinity Cathedral,”
from *Birds Eye View of Columbia, SC, 1872*
(Library of Congress Geography and Map Division, Washington, DC)
Figure 20:
Claude Lorrain (Claude Gellée), *Landscape with the Marriage of Isaac and Rebekah* ('The Mill'), 1648, oil on canvas, 149.2 x 196.9 cm
(The National Gallery, London)
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Thomas Gainsborough, *Mr. and Mrs. Robert Andrews*, c. 1750, oil on canvas, 69.8 x 119.4 cm
(The National Gallery, London)
Figure 22:
Unidentified Artist, *The Start of the Hunt*, c. 1800, oil on canvas, 87.6 x 136.8 cm
(National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC)
Figure 23:
Unidentified Artist, *The End of the Hunt*, c. 1800, oil on canvas, 88.1 x 139.1 cm
(The National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC)
Figure 24:  
Unidentified Artist, *Rose Hill*, c. 1820, oil on canvas  
(The Charleston Museum, Charleston, SC)
Figure 25:
Junius Brutus Stearns, *George Washington as a Farmer at Mount Vernon*, 1851, hand-colored lithograph by Regnier (c. 1853)
(Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, DC)
REFERENCES


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