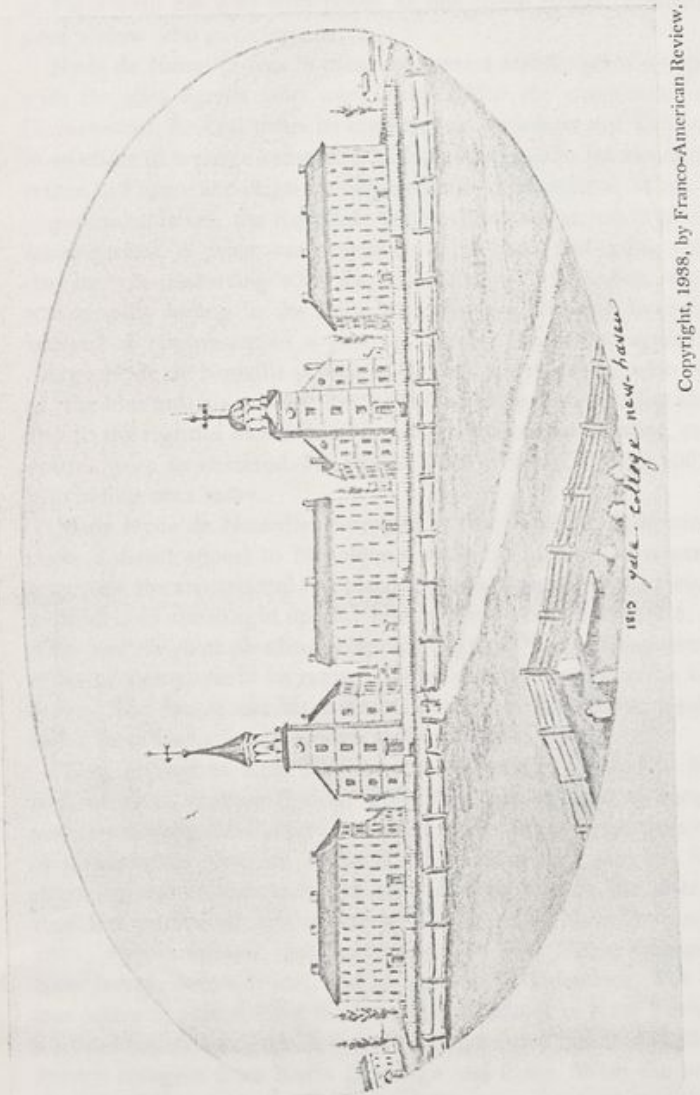

Drawing of Yale College in 1813 by Baroness Hyde de Neuville

The American Drawings of Baroness Hyde de Neuville

FRANK MONAGHAN

The Editors have the privilege of presenting to the public for the first time a rare and charming sketch of Yale College, done in 1813 by Baroness Hyde de Neuville who shared her husband's American exile from 1807 to 1814 and his later career as French Minister to the United States from 1816 to 1822. It is but one of the eighty-five drawings which comprise the extensive and fascinating Hyde de Neuville Collection now in the possession of M. Julien J. Champenois, the distinguished Parisian bibliophile and collector who is well known for his services to Franco-American cultural circles. With his generous permission the Review *now presents this reproduction of the drawing of Yale College, together with other details of this most valuable collection of Franco-Americana.*

THE Baron and Baroness Hyde de Neuville were clearly among the most interesting and intelligent exiles ever to find sanctuary in America. Historians have neglected alike the Baron's exile and his later services as a diplomat.

We know vastly less of the Baroness than we do of her distinguished husband, whose memoirs have appeared in a three-volume French edition and in a condensed two-volume English translation.[1] The Baron speaks candidly of a long series of joys, tribulations, and strange vicissitudes—in all of which his wife was an inseparable partner.

William-John-Hyde de Neuville was born at Charité-sur-Loire on January 24, 1776, the son of an English immigrant who fled to France following the failure of the Jacobite rebellion of 1746. At the time of the French Revolution he was in school in Paris; he espoused the Royalist cause and passionately threw himself into politics. During the Terror he lived a subterranean existence from which he emerged with the Thermidorian Reaction. In 1794, not long after the death of Robespierre, he married Mlle Rouillé de Marigny, whose father had fled before the Revolutionary avalanche to a safe refuge in Sancerre. Hyde de Neuville could not restrain his political fervor, and soon joined the *jeunesse dorée*, organized to combat the remnants of the Terror. Proscribed by the Directory, he narrowly escaped arrest and

1. *Mémoires et souvenirs du baron Hyde de Neuville.* 3 vols. Paris, 1888–92; *Memoirs of Baron Hyde de Neuville; outlaw, exile, ambassador.* Translated and abridged by Frances Jackson. 2 vols. London, 1913.

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transportation on the 18th Fructidor. Meanwhile, he lived obscurely in Paris with his wife who posed as one Mme Roger, ostensibly a poor widow who gave lessons.

Hyde de Neuville was in constant contact and frequent conspiracy with Royalist agents who were plotting for the overthrow of the Government. Several times he interviewed Napoleon and Talleyrand, in an effort to arrange some kind of deal whereby the Bourbons might return to France and reign in coöperation with Napoleon. When these negotiations failed, the Royalists became more desperate in plots and insurrections. A price was placed upon his head; the police thought that he was consorting with the other *émigrés* in London, while he was actually hiding in the French countryside. He was later falsely accused of conspiracy in a plot to murder Napoleon; against this charge Hyde de Neuville protested directly to Napoleon, who offered to take him into his service. But he did not choose to abandon his loyalty to the rightful monarchy. He refused the oath of fidelity, and his estates were sequestered. He retired from political activity and went into hiding once more.

Mme Hyde de Neuville, outraged at this injustice, determined to make a direct appeal to Napoleon's sense of justice. For a personal interview she crossed and recrossed Germany, pursuing the victorious general until she caught up with him in Vienna on November 3, 1805. After her eloquent pleading, Napoleon agreed that the sequestration of his property would be removed if he went into exile in the United States. The Baron and his wife left France on March 12, 1806, and sailed from Cadiz on the *Golden Age* on May 2, 1807.

They arrived in New York on June 20 and proceeded to Albany and thence to Balston Spring. They had been advised to spend the summer touring the Eastern States before selecting a permanent place of residence in America. Mme Hyde de Neuville's sketches form a charming and unique record of many of their travels, for, even after they had purchased a farm and settled down at New Brunswick in 1811, they continued their excursions in New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and as far west as Tennessee. The Baron was active in establishing the Economical School in New York City, a school founded to give instruction to some two hundred children of French refugees from Santo Domingo and Cuba. With the news of the fall of Napoleon the Baron and Baroness resolved to return to

France, and sailed on May 21, 1814, on the *Amigo Protector*, a Portuguese vessel bound for Liverpool. The Baron's talents and fidelity to royalty were later rewarded. In July 1816 he was once more in the United States, this time presenting his credentials as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of France, a post which he discharged until June 1822.

Hyde de Neuville was a man of courage, sensitivity, and intelligence. In his predictions of the future of the United States he demonstrated himself to be no mean prophet. He was filled with admiration for America. He could state that "the United States is truly a land of miracles . . . to us it all seems magical, like the scenery of a theatre"; but he was equally able to penetrate its faults and weaknesses. To him the future of America seemed clear:

> We have no clear idea in France of what is taking place on this continent; at least my own ideas were far removed from the truth. The War of Independence interested me chiefly on account of the part we took in it. I saw a Colony rising in arms, with the legitimate desire of creating a fatherland for itself, that it might no longer have to seek it beyond the seas. I assure you that it was much more than this; and since my arrival in the United States I have become convinced that these rebel colonists are on the way to become one of the most powerful of nations. . . . Only let the Americans be wise . . . let them quietly, without revolution, infuse a little more strength into their administration; let them redress certain abuses, and we shall one day see them the astonishment of Europe. And if they do not actually dictate laws to the two worlds, at least they will be their example and hold the balance between the powers. . . . An intense vitality animates this growing state. . . . One feels, on taking a near view of America, as if something unknown were stirring in the future; as if the tyranny that weighs down our unhappy country were not the last word of this opening century; as if a fresh breeze had passed over the world, at once the cause and the effect of our Revolution. The exact consequences cannot be foreseen and are slow to develop; but it seems, sometimes, as if America had surprised the secret and forestalled the hour.[2]

The Baroness was, in her own fashion, an equally perspicacious observer. Her sketches reveal her as a talented amateur with a gift for accurate detail. As she and her husband traveled in a leisurely fashion about the country she busied her pen and brush in reproducing a bit of everything she saw: farmhouses, churches, old buildings, Indians, dresses, costumes, views of lighthouses, lakes, mountains, and cities.

2. *Memoirs* (English translation), I, 237–238.

Many of the sketches are carefully dated so that it is almost possible to follow the two charming exiles in their interesting travels. She sketched the New York Lighthouse on June 20, 1807, from the deck of the *Golden Age;* she made a delightful drawing of St. John's Church in Washington in July 1822, after the Baron had taken his official leave of the American Government. For the preservation of this unique collection, the general public interested in American history, as well as scholars, must be grateful to M. Champenois. It was he who first established the identity of the artist. Previous to this identification several important drawings had already found their way out of the family possession and were sold at auction in the United States. Several of them are now in the collections of the New York Public Library. While the great bulk of the drawings are in the collections of M. Champenois, he has compiled a complete list of the known drawings by the Baroness; this has been deposited in the Library of Congress where it is available to interested students. This list enumerates twenty-nine drawings not contained in the present collection.

The sketch of Yale College is an indication of the historical importance of many of the drawings. It is easily the best of the few early drawings of the College now extant. There exist several eighteenth-century drawings in which the College buildings appear as a minor part of the background.[3] John Trumbull, in 1792, prepared a plan for Yale College and this included a sketch of then existing buildings with plans for others. But this is a crude and unpictorial architect's sketch.[4] A student's notebook of 1803 contains a drawing of the College buildings, but that by the Baroness is vastly superior to all others of this early period which still survive.[5] It is also noteworthy for the fact that it contains, in the foreground, a corner of the old burying ground on the Green and, in the extreme left, a building which was probably the president's house. The Baroness made three other sketches of New Haven scenes; two of these are dated. From these dates it would seem that the sketch of Yale College was made during either July or August 1813. The year itself is clearly indicated in the hand of the Baroness.

3. *See* A. P. Stokes, *Historical Prints of New Haven, Connecticut, with special reference to Yale College and the Green*. New Haven, 1910.

4. A reproduction of this drawing was first published as the frontispiece to *Letters and Papers of Ezra Stiles, President of Yale College*, 1778–1795. Ed. by Isabel M. Calder. New Haven, 1933. It will also be found in the *Yale University Library Gazette*, July, 1934.

5. Reproduced in the *Yale University Library Gazette* (January, 1936), X, 59.

Le Sculpteur Houdon

Premier Ambassadeur de l'Art Français aux Etats-Unis

RAYMOND LANGE

L'AMITIE des peuples n'est pas fondée seulement sur des accords politiques, des traités de commerce ou des échanges de marchandises. Elle doit, pour être effective et réelle, être doublée par une mutuelle compréhension et de communes aspirations d'idéal.

Le capital d'art et de beauté qu'a, par les siècles, offert la France au monde, a été un des facteurs essentiels de son prestige. Ce sont ses écrivains, ses peintres, ses sculpteurs qui toujours ont été les plus actifs artisans de sa grandeur à l'étranger. Et, dans les relations franco-américaines, le rôle joué par l'attraction spirituelle de la France, par ses chefs-d'œuvre, ses monuments, ses vieilles pierres, ses meubles précieux, ses jardins harmonieux, a été et reste considérable. Jean-Antoine Houdon fut le premier des artistes de France qui fit, en terre américaine, resplendir le génie artistique de son pays. Il est juste que sa mémoire reste précieuse à ceux qui cherchent à faire toujours plus efficace et plus intime la compréhension franco-américaine.

Les plus glorieuses destinées ont parfois les plus humbles origines. Ce n'est pas là une vérité qui surprendra nos amis d'Amérique. Houdon naquit d'une famille très simple où rien ne pouvait faire présager ni son précoce génie ni sa future renommée. Le 20 mars 1741, dans la pauvre mansarde d'une demeure aristocratique de Versailles, le valet de chambre d'un seigneur voyait d'une unité s'augmenter une famille déjà nombreuse, puisqu'elle comprenait sept filles et deux garçons. Tout alentour, s'épanouit le luxe raffiné de la Cour; sous le soleil du printemps naissant, le palais de Louis XIV resplendit de la blancheur de ses marbres; dans des tourbillons de poussière, caracolent des chevaliers; derrière les glaces des carrosses, de nobles dames enrubannées rectifient l'aguichement subtil de mouches provocantes; dans la chambre misérable, se déroule l'angoissant mystère d'une naissance; un enfant ouvre les yeux au jour: Jean-Antoine Houdon, qui sera le plus génial sculpteur de son époque.

Le bambin grandit: les yeux écarquillés, il est témoin muet des