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Thomas Day S-Curve





Thomas Day S-Curve

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Virginia Commonwealth University

Pattern Project Research

Interior Environments

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S-Curve

pattern name	<i>S-Curve (Thomas Day); Whatnot, 1853-60</i>
or description	<i>S-Curve (Thomas Day); Newell Post, 1855</i> <i>S-Curve (Thomas Day); Secretary, 1841</i>
location	<i>united states, north carolina museum of history</i> <i>metropolitan museum of art, Glass-Dameron House</i>
date produced	<i>19th-century (1821-1860)</i>
craft location	<i>milton, north carolina</i>
item type	<i>furniture</i>
materials / craft	<i>mahogany, mahogany veneer, maple, yellow</i> <i>& white pine, oak, tulip poplar</i>
culture	<i>african american</i>
colonizer	<i>united states (antebellum period)</i>
pattern motif	<i>opposing scrolls, undulating curves</i> <i>empire, restauration, rococo, neoclassical</i> <i>Ghanian Adrinka Akan "Sankofa"</i>



Attributes

Thomas Day
(b.1801 d.1861)

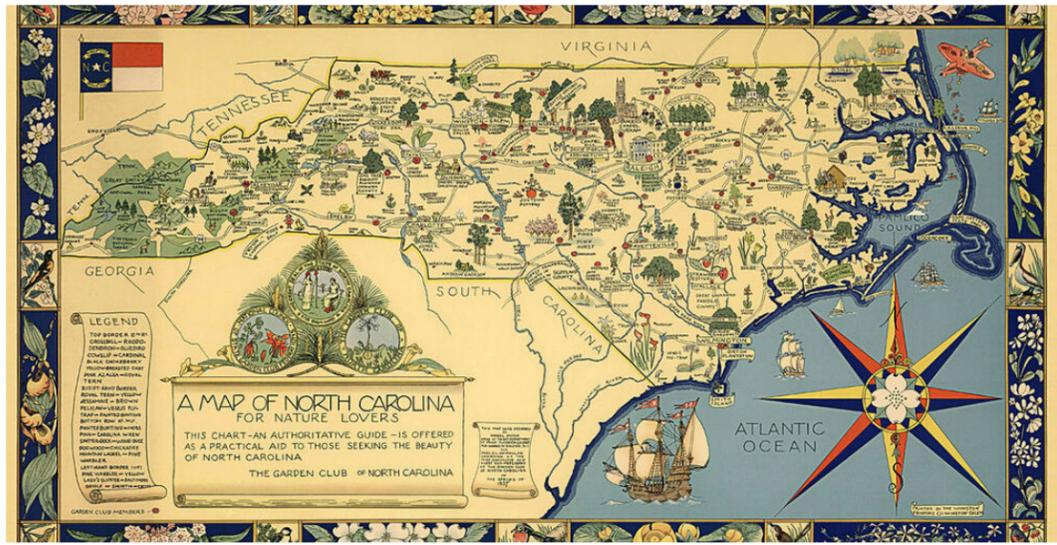
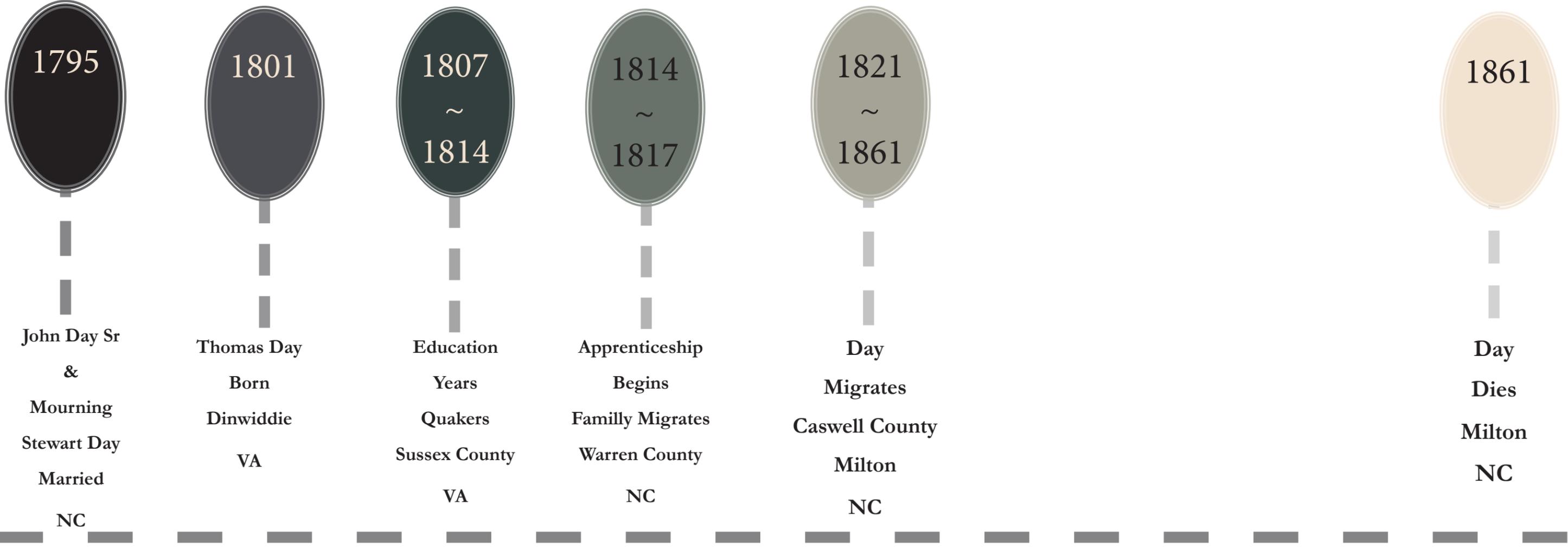
African American Master
Cabinetmaker

"Exuberant Style"

bold, repetitive, rhythmic,
symmetrical & dynamic



Artisan Timeline



Mahogany

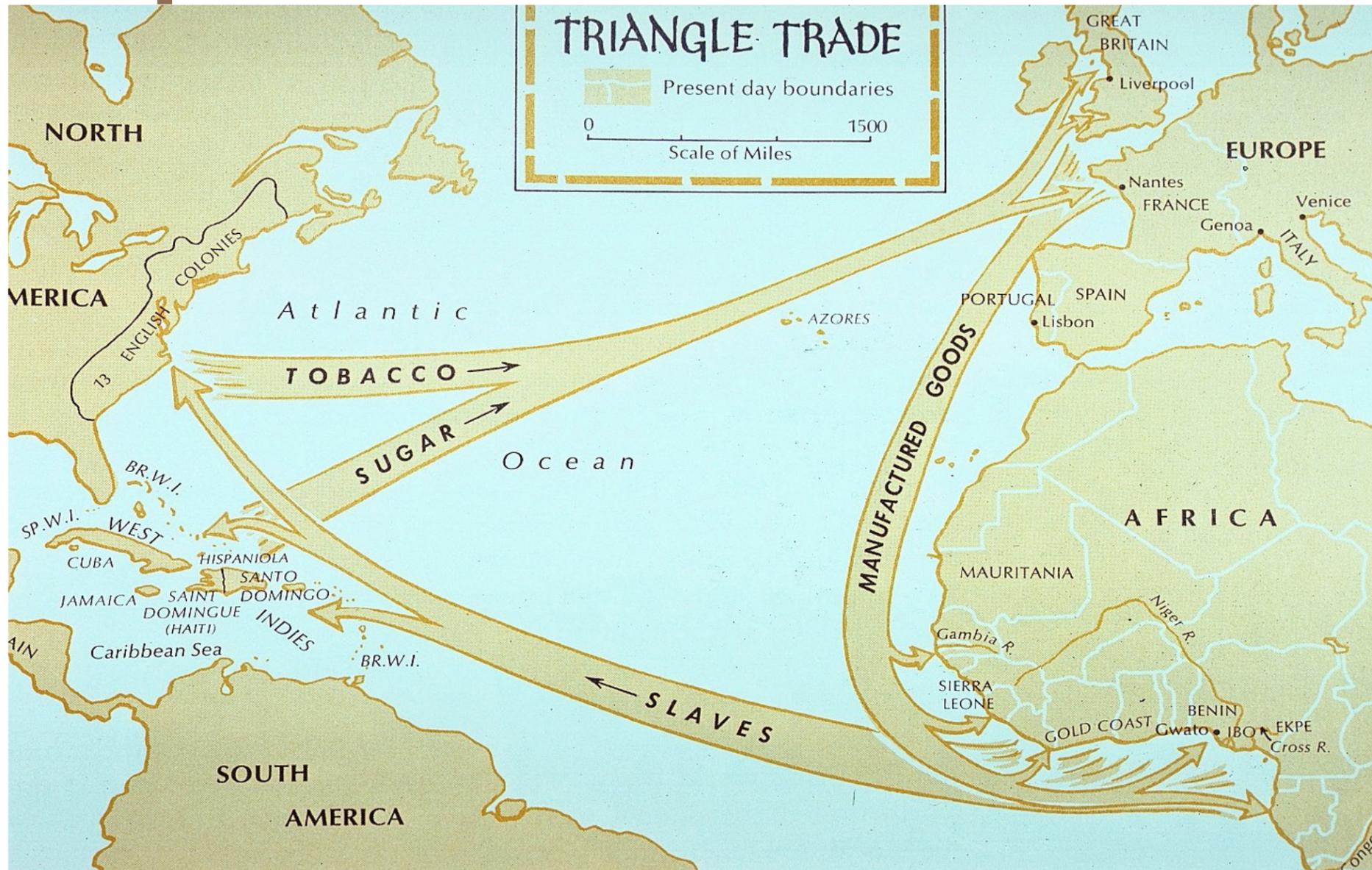
Santo Domingo, Hispanola,
Cuba,
Jamacia, West Indies

Yellow Pine
White Pine
Walnut
Cherry

Tulip Poplar
Maple
Oak



Furniture & Materials & Labor



(From top left to bottom) Thomas Day, Sideboard, 1840; Thomas Day, Buchman Newell Post, unk yr; Thomas Day, Amorie, unk year; Thomas Day, Dining Room Chairs, unk yr; Caswell County, NC, Photograph Collection, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ncccha/albums/72157594376026027/>

Enslaved Peoples
Indentured Servants
Immigrants

The Road to Union Tavern

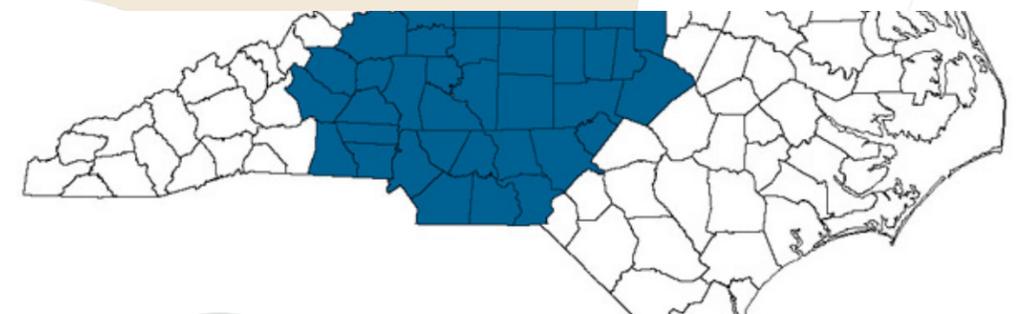
Milton, NC



Petersburg

Caswell County
Milton, North Carolina

Warrenton, North Carolina



of N.C. Cabinet Makers by County, 1850

Caswell County (15)

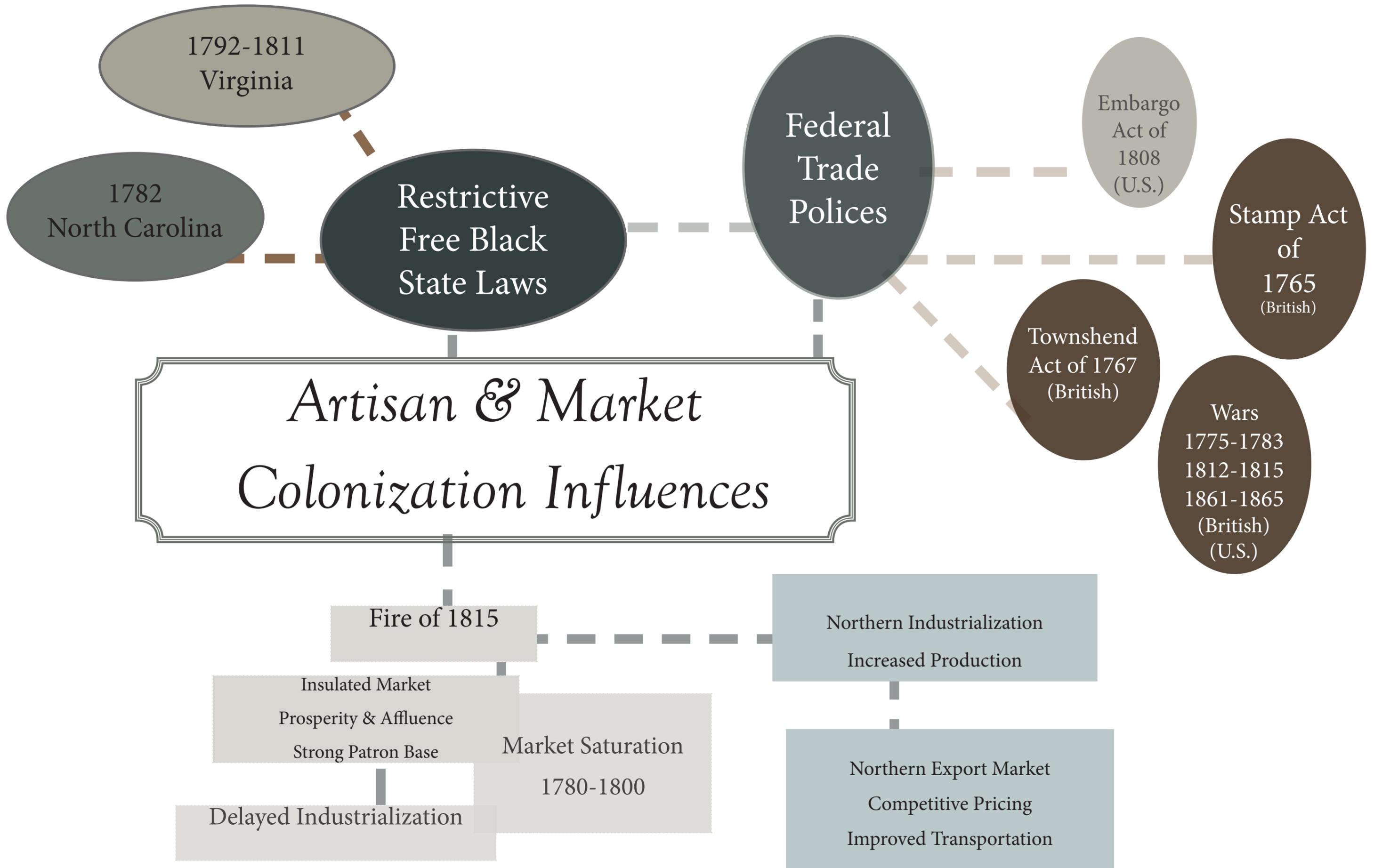
Warren County (4)

4%

1/6

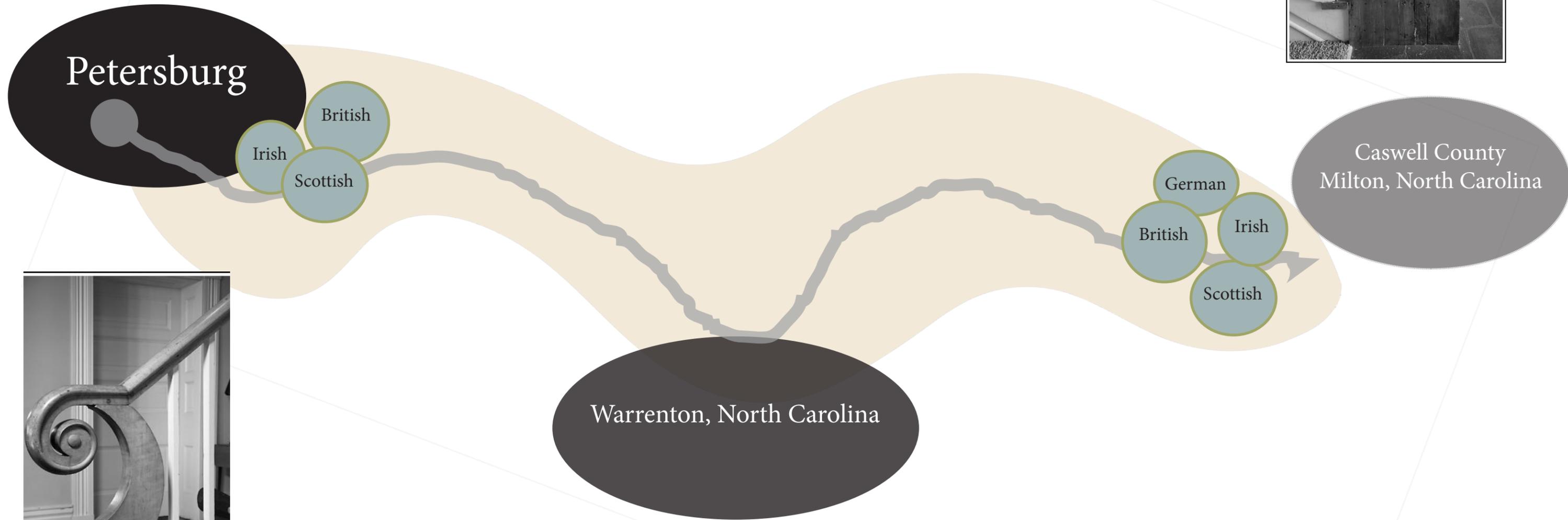
11.9%

Thomas Day, Newell Post, 1855, Littleton Taswell-Hunt House, <http://www.chipstone.org/article.php/648/American-Furniture-2013/The-Missing-Chapter-in-the-Life-of-Thomas-Day>

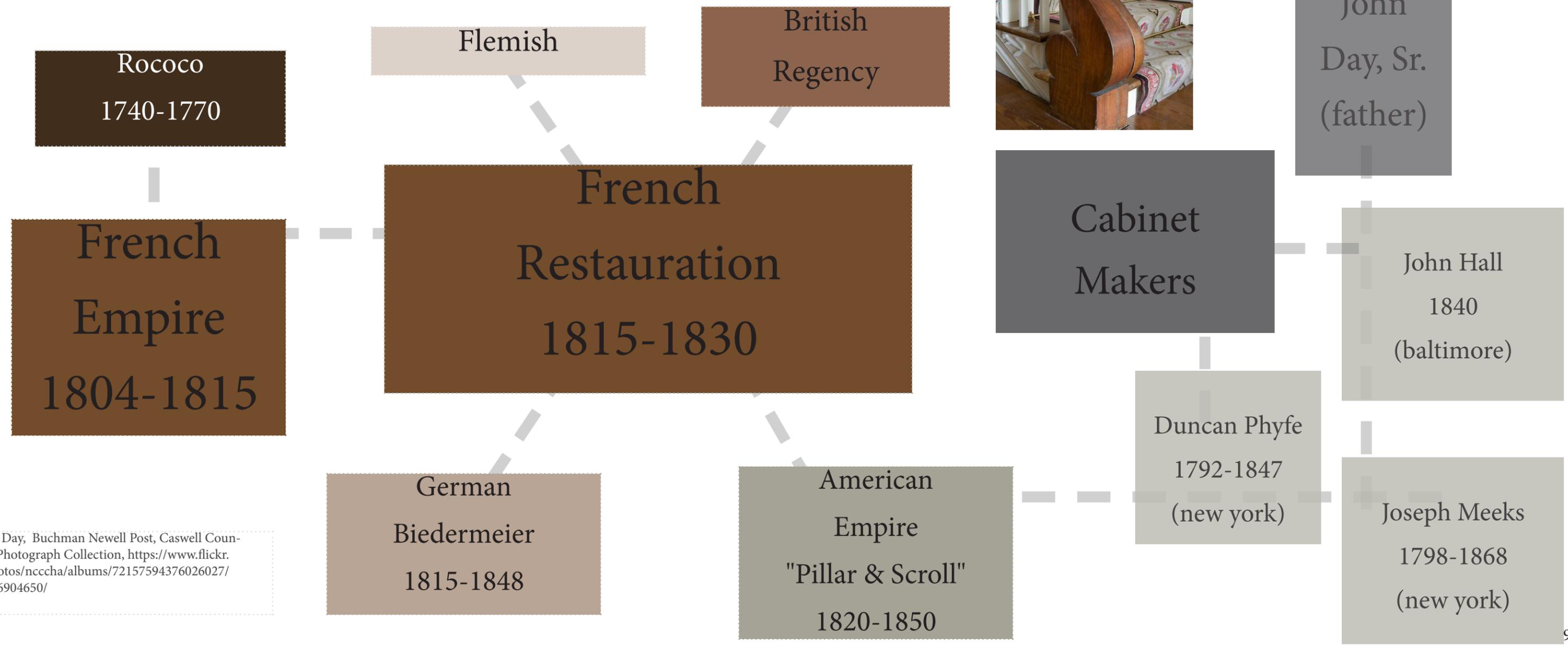
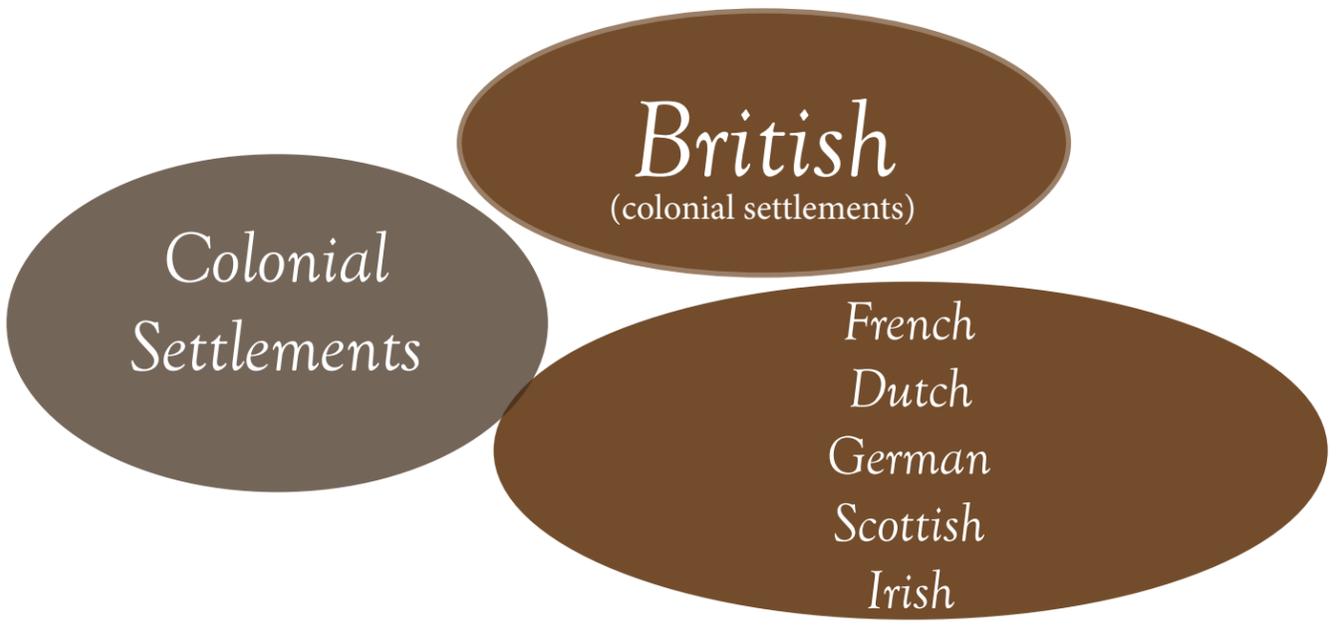


Colonial Settlements

700 Cabinet Makers in the South 1737-1820

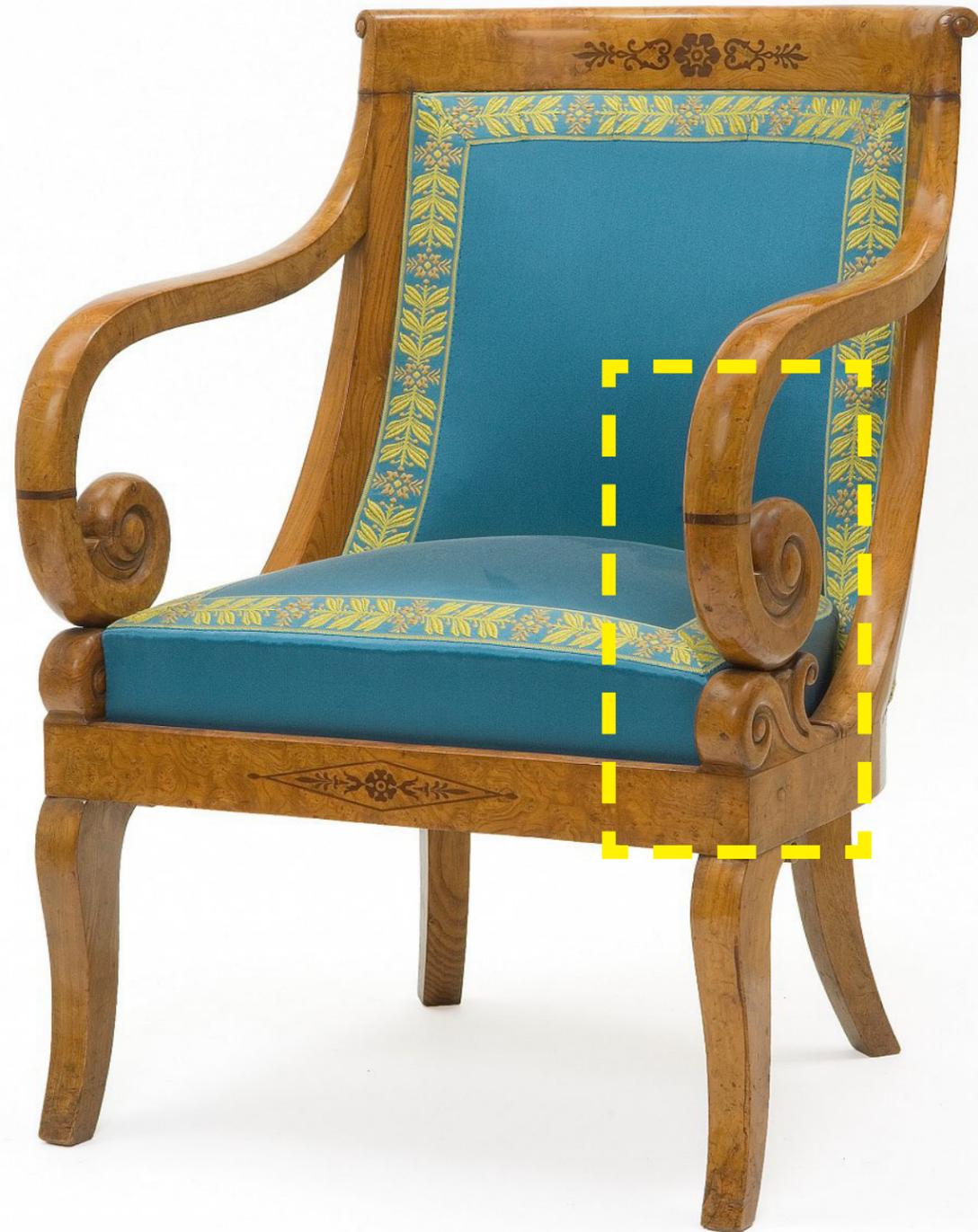


Pattern Colonization Influences



Thomas Day, Buchman Newell Post, Caswell County, NC, Photograph Collection, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ncccha/albums/72157594376026027/with/456904650/>

French Restoration



Gondola chair

France, 1828 For the Duchess of Berry's Indian salon at the Palais de Saint Cloud

Ash plaster encrusted with amaranth National Furniture Depot, 1953 Inv. MOB NAT 11368

© MAD / photo: Jean Tholance

<https://madparis.fr/francais/musees/musee-des-arts-decoratifs/parcours/xixe-siecle/la-duchesse-de-berry-et-le-mobilier-charles-x/fauteuil-gondole>

Museum of Decorative Arts, Paris, France

German Biedermeier

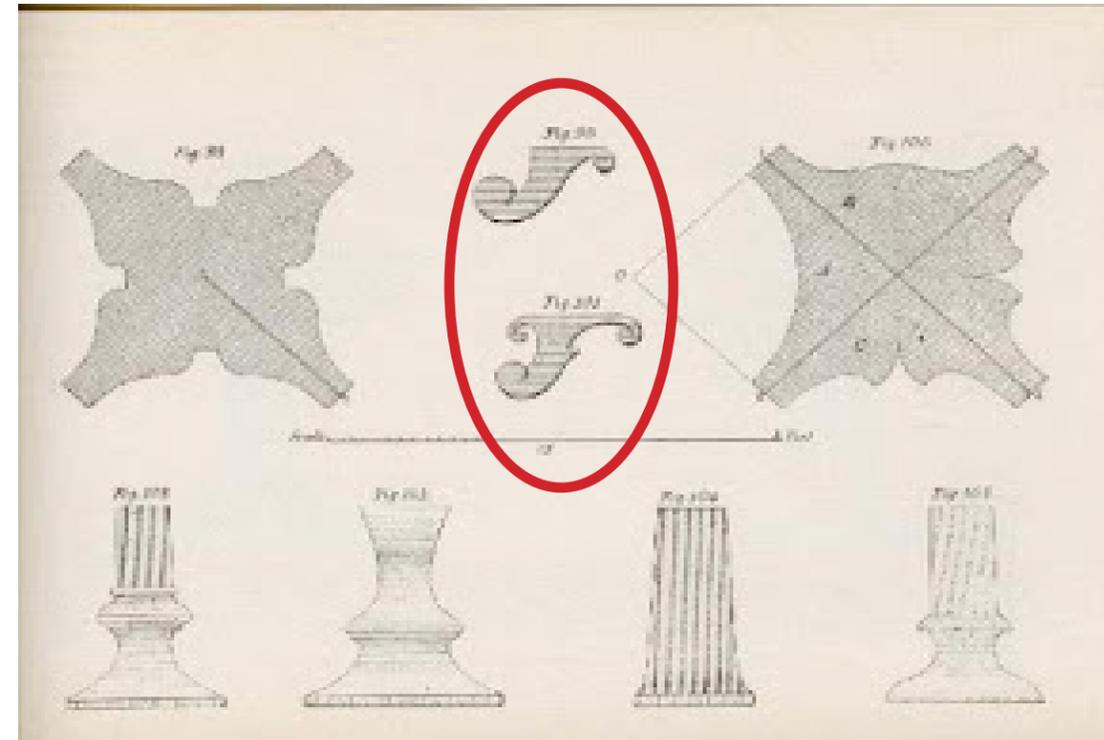
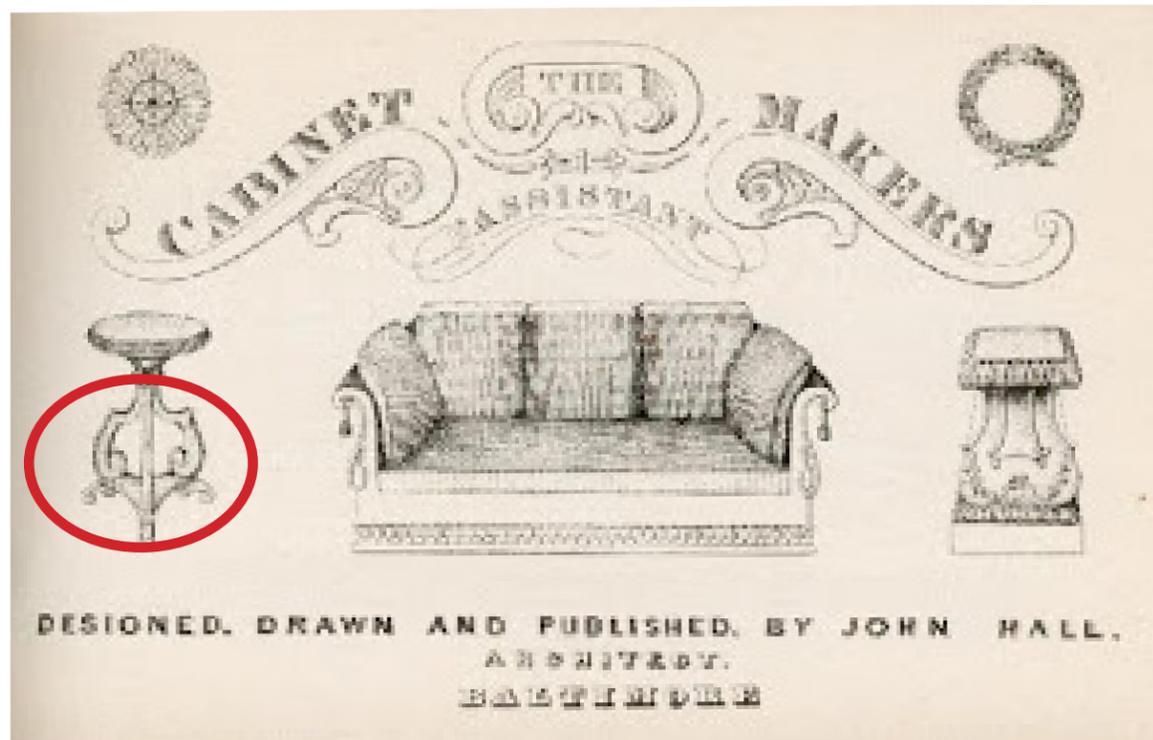


Console, 1825-1830

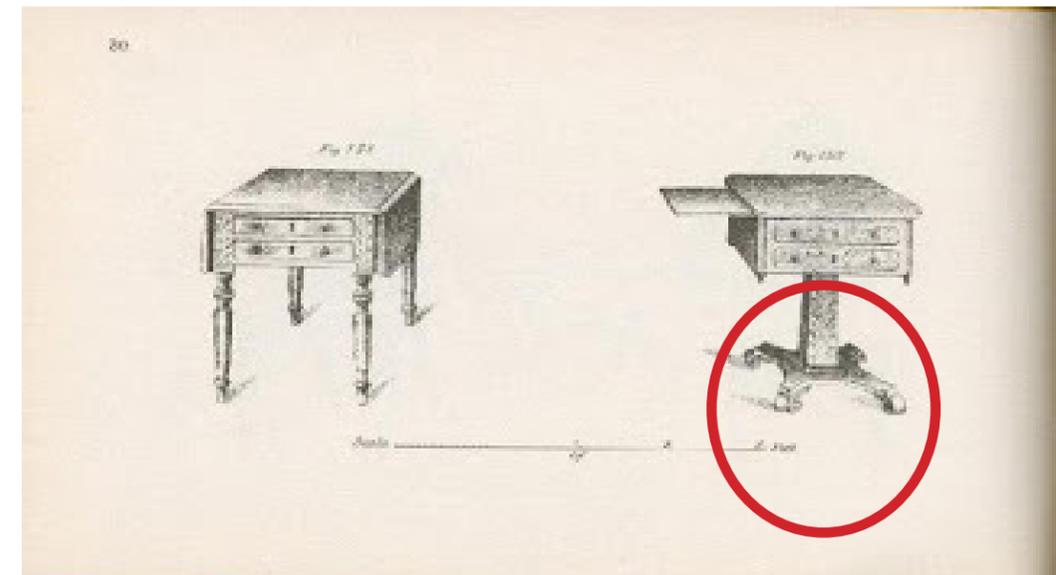
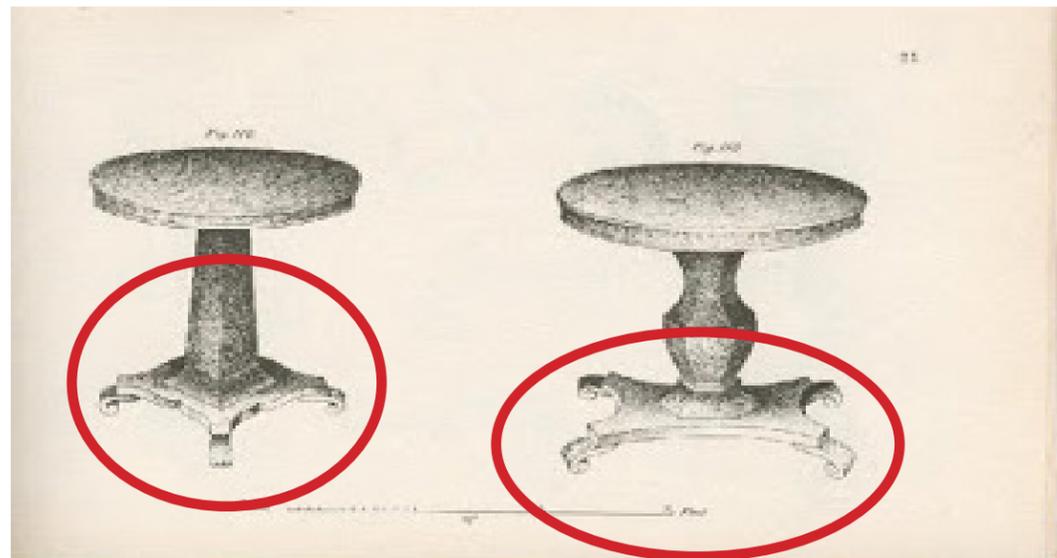
Birch wood, Pine wood

<https://cyfrowe.mnw.art.pl/pl/katalog/457055>

National Museum, Warsaw



American Restauration
(John Hall)



Hall, J., & Smith, Thomas Gordon. (1996). John Hall and the Grecian style in America : A re-print of three pattern books published in Baltimore in 1840 (Acanthus Press reprint series. 19th century, landmarks in design ; v. 2). New York, N.Y.: Acanthus Press.

American Restauration

(Duncan Phyfe)



Pier Table, 1835-1840, Duncan Phyfe, Metropolitan Museum of Art

American, Mahogany, marble, glass

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/5638>

Pattern Elements

S-Curve (S-Scroll, Grecian Scroll)

heavy ornamental carving

flat planes (dimensional)

scrolls curved sharply inward

massive scrolls supports

angular front scroll supports

homogenous

simple geometries

Newell Posts

Elongated S-Curve

Tightly exaggerated scroll resembling a "snail shell"



(Far Left) Thomas Day, Secretary, 1841, Metropolitan Museum of Art, <https://collections.mfa.org/objects/549493/secretary>

(Above) Thomas Day, Woodside-Newell Post, Caswell County, NC, Photograph Collection, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ncccha/albums/72157594376026027/>



Otto, C. (1965). Artisan Unknown, American Furniture of the Nineteenth Century, pg 106, Rosalie, Natchez, MS, State Shrine of the Mississippi, D.A.R.

Pattern Proportion

bilateral and symmetrical along the axis

consistent use of scale and proportion all elements

(ornaments, supports, pulls, arm grips, panels)

intentional use of positive and negative space

emphasis on geometries, simplistic

S-curve pattern appears in supports and ornaments

angular, inverted, repetitive, dense

curvilinear



(Above) Thomas Day, Secretary, 1841, Metropolitan Museum of Art, <https://collections.mfa.org/objects/549493/secretary>

(From left to right) Thomas Day, Dresser, unk year; Thomas Day, Sideboard, 1840; Thomas Day, Amorie, unk year; Caswell County, NC, Photograph Collection, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ncccha/albums/72157594376026027/>



Design Principles

balance, rhythm, scale, proportion, harmony, density



(Above) Thomas Day, Secretary, 1841, Metropolitan Museum of Art, <https://collections.mfa.org/objects/549493/secretary>

Reflections

Pattern Influenced by

Colonization

Trade Policies

Market Variability/Competition

Legal Parameters

Artisan Identity & Talent & Culture

Design Latitude & Flexibility

Materiality & Resource Availability

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