

For most of us, the sheer tactile pleasure of running one's fingers through wet, viscous paint is experienced primarily in young childhood. During the early decades of the nineteenth century, the abstract whirls, swirls, and dots similar to those we reveled in as children were elevated to a highly expressionistic and controlled

manipulation of wet paint on wood surfaces. Using their fingers, brushes, and a variety of textured materials to direct the process, professional decorative painters produced fantastic, creative effects that glorified even the humblest pieces of furniture. This transforming power of paint is considered in the exhibition "Surface Attraction: Painted Furniture from the Collection." The museum's collection is particularly rich in these bold expressions on furniture that transcend utility through the masterful application of colorful paints and pigmented glazes in visually dynamic patterns. Various techniques were employed to achieve stunning—and sometimes startling—effects using a wide array of tools.

Multiple factors had an impact on painted decoration applied to furniture. Aesthetic concepts remembered from Europe migrated with the earliest colonists. Other fash-

ionable ideas conceived in Europe quickly proliferated in America's urban centers and soon after reached localized areas of furniture making, where they were interpreted and adapted to new markets. Changing methods of production and distribution, as well as technical innovations, also determined trends in furniture design and decoration. But more mundane considerations, such as cost, required skill level, and quality of pigments, also had a significant effect on the appearance of painted furniture.

Most vernacular American furniture from the colonial period through the nineteenth century was made from local woods and was stained, glazed, or painted, and then varnished. Two primary motivations are most often cited as the reasons so much furniture received painted treatments. The first is that paint protected the surface of the furniture and unified its presentation by disguising the use of several different woods. The routine use of primary and secondary woods was partly a measure of expediency—less expensive woods were used in areas that were not visible—and partly a response to function, as appropriate woods were used in the areas of highest wear. The second motivation arose from a desire to imitate expensive materials, such as marble and scarce woods, in the less expensive medium of paint. Such decorative painting became expressive of regional taste or reflective of consumption patterns.

**BLANKET CHEST-ON-CHEST
OF DRAWERS (detail)**

Artist unidentified

Maine

c. 1830-1840

Paint on pine, with replaced

brass drawer pulls

40⁷/₈ × 39⁷/₈ × 19¹/₄"

American Folk Art Museum,

gift of Cyril Irwin Nelson in

memory of Robert Bishop,

2001.33.5



Surface

"Surface
Attraction"
is on view
at the
American
Folk Art
Museum
through
March 26,
2006.

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The paints used on furniture were primarily ground in oil using the earth, mineral, and early synthetic pigments available to all artistic practitioners, whether they were painting portraits, houses, or furniture. This palette remained fairly unchanged throughout the eighteenth century, when a little more than three dozen colors were imported from Europe or were manufactured from a small number of American sources. New pigments introduced in the early nineteenth century resulted from innovations in color chemistry and production, as well as the addition of newly discovered materials such as cobalt and chrome. Among the most common early colors were mineral pigments, including red and white lead, iron oxides, and verdigris; organic pigments such as boneblack, which was produced from charred bone; earth pigments, including ochre and umbers; and synthetic pigments, notably Prussian blue.

The coatings used on wooden furniture fall generally into three categories: transparent, metallic, and opaque. Transparent coatings, such as varnishes, were made from natural resins or gums dissolved in oil or solvent. Metallic coatings, including gold, bronze, and silver, were applied to wood in the form of leaf or powder by gilding or stenciling. Opaque paint was composed of dry pigment that was suspended in a fluid vehicle, such as linseed oil. This paint was often

invention of the collapsible metal tube in 1841 and ready-made paints in the 1860s, small quantities of paint could be kept in bladders and larger quantities in casks. These could not be preserved for long periods of time, however, and it was not uncommon for an artist to prepare only enough paint for each day's work.

Because it was hand-ground and applied with hand-made brushes, early paint tended to be dispersed unevenly on furniture and interior surfaces, often leaving ropy streaks and spots of pure pigment. It is a widely held misconception that milk or casein was the most popular vehicle for paint used on furniture. In fact, linseed oil, expressed from flax seeds, was by far the most common vehicle used to produce opaque paint and transparent oil varnishes.

In part because paint production was a specialized, dangerous, and laborious activity, furniture decoration was generally the province of professional rather than amateur artisans. Furthermore, the public at large was not privy to the mysteries of the early painters and stainers, descendants of a guild system designed to protect trade secrets from becoming general knowledge. Until the American Civil War era, when premixed paints in cans became available, artists had an intimate relationship with their materials—grinding pigments, boiling oil, mixing colors, and making brushes. It was also imperative for the decorative painter to have a

By Stacy C. Hollander

Attraction

Painted Furniture from the Collection

prepared with lead compounds to accelerate drying. In addition, a binder, such as white lead or zinc, was usually combined with the paint and held the particles of pigment in place once the medium had dried. The preparation of the medium determined the viscosity of the paint, whether it was opaque or transparent, and its propensity to spread and adhere to a prepared surface. For instance, some lead compounds caused linseed oil to gel, and with the addition of mastic varnish or beeswax produced a buttery medium, such as megilp, which had desirable qualities of texture and workability.

Dry pigment needed to be finely ground in the oil to wet the grains thoroughly; the finer the pigment was ground, the richer the color it produced. Grinding was accomplished using a conical stone, known as a muller, against a marble slab; toxic pigments such as vermilion and leads might be ground using a paint mill, which limited physical contact with these poisonous materials. Before the

practical knowledge of the behavior and longevity of pigments in combination with oils, resins, and varnishes. In some cases, pigments were imported directly from Europe by the artist himself, who might in turn sell the pigments locally; more often colors were purchased in dry or paste form from professional colormen, druggists, and other merchants.

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the same basic pigments were available to all artists. Though their preparation might differ depending upon the object's end use, the same professional once practiced many genres of painting. As these applications separated into purely artistic and applied "mechanical" spheres, painters increasingly specialized in one area or another. The canvas upon which the artists in this exhibition worked was furniture, and their efforts enlivened homes throughout the American countryside. Today their names are largely lost to history, but their fingerprints remain in the expressive "paintings" they have left behind.



JOHN PARNELL

LOW BLANKET CHEST
 Artist unidentified
 Hudson River Valley,
 New York
 1792
 Paint on pine
 24 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 48 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 18 $\frac{3}{8}$ "
 American Folk Art
 Museum, gift of Howard
 and Jean Lipman in
 honor of
 Cyril Irwin Nelson,
 1983.25.1

Identity in Paint

The *Low Blanket Chest* relates to a number of Dutch-influenced *kasten*, or cupboards, that were made early in the eighteenth century, primarily in New York and New Jersey, though the date indicates that it was painted well after the major period of production. These *kasten* featured bold grisaille decoration of pendant fruit and drapery swags combined with architectural imagery of columns and arches. The blue-gray color of this example, most likely mixed from Prussian blue and white lead, is applied over a deep red-brown primer coat. The massive cupboards were usually set on ball feet in the front and bracket feet in the back; this low blanket chest rests on four ball feet and exhibits similar painted architectural imagery, though it is less robust than that of earlier examples. The late date suggests that the delicacy and restraint of the decoration may have been a response to neoclassical taste.¹

Imitative Graining

During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, architectural surfaces such as baseboards and fireplace surrounds were painted in imitation of marble, cedar, or mahogany. On furniture, the most commonly simulated wood grain was mahogany, though instructions for other exotic decorative finishes, such as japanning and tortoiseshell, were provided in English design sources as early as 1688, when the influential *Treatise on Japanning and Varnishing* by John Stalker and George Parker was first published.

The *Secretary Bookcase* is painted with a spotted, mottled surface evocative of tortoiseshell, which may also be inspired by the early "sponge painting" seen on architectural interiors. The term referred to a spotted patterning executed in paint as a series of freehand dots. What appears to be a brown ground coat is actually a varnished surface that has darkened with age and grime. The original ground was in fact a vibrant yellow ochre spotted with red lead, white lead, and black.²

When graining was reinterpreted at the turn of the nineteenth century, new techniques, improved glazes, and the vogue for Fancy painting aspired to realistic effects that “deceive us into a belief that we look upon marble, mahogany, stone, etc.”³ “Fancy” referred to an aesthetic movement, most popular between 1790 and 1840, that advocated the use of the creative imagination to stir the senses and delight the eye. In the context of house and furniture painting, Fancy painting meant the art of imitating exotic and highly patterned woods and marbles, and its practitioners came to be known as marblers or grainers.

Preparation was time-consuming, with a priming coat that sealed the porous wood followed by one or two additional ground layers. Once dry, the ground was polished to a smooth finish and was then ready to receive the artistry of the painter’s hand and imagination. Graining tools included badger-hair brushes, sponges, leather, quills, sticks, feathers, putty, chamois, combs, and other materials that were used to provide texture in the paints and glazes. After a surface was decorated and dried, it received protective coats of varnish, which provided the additional benefit of lending depth and saturation to the colors beneath. The paint decorator charged for the area he covered in solid paint, the number of coats that were applied, then added fees for graining and marbling and for the use of expensive colors such as green and blue.

Once confined primarily to tabletops, imitative painting began to appear on case furniture after about 1810. Trompe l’oeil surface treatments became preferable to the very woods they imitated. According to one mid-nineteenth-century writer, “It is doubtful whether it would be desirable to select many of the fancy woods for house decoration, in preference to the imitations which are produced by modern artists . . . even if they could be obtained at the same cost.”⁴ Until about 1820, mahogany remained the most popular hardwood to imitate, grained in umber on a medium-yellow ground. With the introduction of the Empire style, however, rosewood became the dominant wood grain, the rich black and red striations providing a handsome background for archaeologically inspired motifs applied in gold leaf or metallic stenciling.

The unusual form of the *Blanket Chest-on-Chest of Drawers* (see page 52) may be unique, as the top portion is a detached, independently constructed blanket chest that simply rests on the bottom chest of drawers. Accentuating the form is a masterfully executed painted decoration of black over red that creates the appearance of a complex knotted and burlled wood surface through sponging and freehand penciling. Areas of dense and dramatic patterning alternate with delicate strokes, resulting in an effect that is fantastic and abstract, yet also imitative.

SECRETARY BOOKCASE

Artist unidentified
New England
1760-1780
Paint on maple and pine
67¾ x 37 x 16¾"
American Folk Art
Museum purchase,
Eva and Morris Feld
Folk Art Acquisition
Fund, 1981.12.1



JOHN PARNELL

Imaginative Graining

During the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the widespread enthusiasm for Fancy painting freed furniture decorators to give full sway to their imaginations, resulting in fantastic effects painted on wood furniture that were nevertheless firmly rooted in traditional and time-tested techniques. The descriptive names given to these techniques, known as two-toned finishes, or “veining,” are almost as evocative and fanciful as the graining itself: vinegar painting, shelling, seaweed painting, mottling, sponging, stippling, scumbling.⁵ In each of these finishes, the lightest tones—frequently yellow ochre or white lead—were usually applied first, then when dry overlaid with a darker glaze or paint. This second layer was manipulated using various tools, textured materials, and flat brushes of different sizes. After the primary effects were created, finely detailed veining could be applied in a darker pigment using a very small brush. Once the entire surface was dry, it received coats of varnish that protected the surface and added luster. In addition to paints and glazes, a gelled medium such as megilp was sometimes used for grain painting because it enhanced the handling properties of the paints.

The *Chest over Drawers* is one of several chests with highly similar painted decoration. The technique used to produce the patterning, usually referred to as vinegar painting or vinegar graining, exploits the chemical reaction between oil and vinegar to create interesting dispersions of pigment. For this method, the furniture is covered with a solid ground that is then coated in a glaze containing vinegar in the suspension. When putty prepared with oil is rolled or stamped over the surface, the glaze separates into seaweedlike patterns, with the effects controlled through the artist’s manipulation of the putty. True vinegar painting is not as common as once believed: Similar effects could be achieved more easily by pouncing a crumpled material, such as leather, onto the wet glaze in a technique known as sponging. Pigment that pooled in the folds of the leather produced the seaweed patterning.

This chest displays a variant on vinegar graining called shelling, in which one end of the putty is held stationary while the length of the roll is stepped around the wet glaze in a semicircular motion, resulting in fan-shaped patterns that can be overlapped. This type of free-spirited surface treatment may be a rural expression of Fancy, combining an abstract allusion to neoclassical corner fans with colors evocative of New England’s dramatic fall foliage.



CHEST OVER DRAWERS
Artist unidentified
New England
1825-1840
Paint on pine
37¼ × 39 × 18"
American Folk Art Museum,
gift of the Lipman Family
Foundation in honor of
Jean and Howard Lipman,
1999.8.6



BLANKET CHEST
Artist unidentified
New England
c. 1830
Paint and smoke
decoration on wood
25 × 43 × 19"
American Folk Art
Museum, gift of the
Lipman Family Foundation
in honor of Jean and
Howard Lipman, 1999.8.10

Smoke Graining

Some of the most delicate and impressionistic effects in painted furniture decoration during the early decades of the nineteenth century were achieved through smoke graining. As the name suggests, smoke graining was accomplished by passing a burning candle over a partially wet paint or glaze coat. The oily, sooty residue from the smoking candle was literally captured in the tacky surface to create the graceful, cloudlike trails that are characteristic of this technique. When the surface dried, it was varnished for protection and to give it greater visual depth.

Smoke graining was used most often for overall patterning on boxes and small pieces of furniture. Sometimes it was effectively combined with another technique, such as stenciling. In the *Blanket Chest*, the patterning is smoked in rows that are contained within a blue-painted reserve. This is further enhanced with “striping,” applying a thin line with a fine brush known as a pencil. To steady the artist’s hand, English designer Thomas Sheraton (1751–1806) suggested bringing the paint-laden pencil to a fine point, and, while holding it between the thumb and first finger, using the middle finger as a guide by running it along a straight edge of the work to be striped.⁶

TALL CASE CLOCK
Artist unidentified;
clockworks attributed to
Lambert W. Lewis
(c. 1785–1834)
Trumbull County, Ohio
1812–1834
Paint on pine case, with
watercolor on paper clock
face and wooden clockworks
87 × 21½ × 12¾"
American Folk Art Museum
purchase, Eva and Morris
Feld Folk Art Acquisition
Fund, 1981.12.22



JOHN FARNELL

Dry-Brush Graining

In dry-brush graining, a flat brush was first dipped in paint, then most of the wet paint was squeezed out of the brush before it touched the surface. The small amount of paint remaining left streaky impressions of the bristles as the brush was pressed or stroked onto the wood. The ground color often showed through the brushstrokes, and at times bristles were deliberately thinned from a brush to create more interesting textures. The dry-brush technique was often performed freehand, without the aid of a pattern or guide, and tended to be simple, linear, and repetitive, featuring designs such as scallops or wavy lines. Other patterns could be formed by smashing the brush onto the surface randomly, leaving spongelike marks. These patterns were most frequently applied using a dark paint over a solid ground coat of a lighter color.

The *Tall Case Clock* is housed in a wooden case painted yellow with green striping. It is embellished overall with a spotted decoration that has been called paw print. The pattern is an example of a dry-brush technique that was probably made by dabbing the surface with a crumpled material or a dry brush.

In rural areas, it was not unusual for expensive clockworks to be purchased from well-known makers but housed in locally made cases. The clock was found in New Jersey, but it relates most strongly in style to Connecticut clock- and cabinetmaking traditions, and the movement is a Connecticut type, with pull-up weights that run the clock for thirty hours. The name L.W. Lewis on the face refers to Lambert W. Lewis, who was originally from Southbury, Connecticut, but had purchased property in Ohio by 1806. With several of his brothers, he became the earliest and largest manufacturer of clocks in Trumbull County, an area on the Western Reserve that was developed primarily by Connecticut Yankees.⁷

Fancy to Factory

Archaeological discoveries in the eighteenth century dramatically changed widely held perceptions of the classical world. The color, variety, and intimate scale of the residences that were unearthed in excavations such as Herculaneum and Pompeii were a far cry from the gleaming white-marble colossal government buildings and temples commonly associated with ancient Greece and Rome in the public imagination.

In European decorative arts, new interpretations of classicism gave birth to a neoclassicism characterized by geometric forms combined with classical motifs such as fans, paterae, urns, and swags of flowers. Early examples of Fancy furniture, from about 1790 to 1815, embraced neoclassicism and balanced its rationalism with a sense of imagination imparted primarily through its painted surfaces. Among the earliest furniture makers in America to parlay this new aesthetic into a thriving business were John and Hugh Finlay, brothers who set up shop in Baltimore. In addition to their inventory of classical-inspired Fancy furniture forms, they were the first to offer "FANCY and JAPANED Furniture—with or without views adjacent to the city." These landscape views were painted by special artists for hire, notably Francis Guy (1760–1820), who worked with the brothers from 1804 to 1806. After commissions for local views of land and houses were satisfied, concerns such as the Finlays' offered "Fancy landscapes," imaginary views conceived by the hired artists.⁸

The *Armchair with View of Ithaca Falls* is painted in oil on the broad top rail with a "real view" of the falls and the many mills that it powered. Ithaca Falls had the most dramatic and precipitous drop of the six falls along a stretch of Fall Creek. Its identification in this scene is confirmed by the presence of the wooden flume that was replaced by a tunnel in 1830 and 1831.

The growing taste for Fancy chairs led to techniques that sped up production and reduced cost, thereby making fashionable furniture available to the broadest clientele. One such technique involved combining Fancy ornament with simple construction, such as the traditional Windsor chair featuring wooden plank seats rather than woven cane. Fancy Windsors were fashionably elevated through elaborate painted treatments, such as the architectural views embellishing the crest rails of the *Side Chairs*. The friezes are painted in a golden-yellow paint outlined in black that gives the impression of stenciled repeats in gold leaf or metallic powders, which may have been laid out with the aid of templates. The set includes six chairs, each with a different architectural scene.

Over the next few decades, the making and marketing of Fancy furniture, chairs in particular, relied increasingly upon methods of mass production. Parts might be purchased inexpensively from one locale, then assembled, decorated, and sold in another. Improvements in overland and water shipping allowed finished products to be distributed to expanding markets in farther reaches of the country and abroad. As



ARMCHAIR WITH VIEW OF ITHACA FALLS
Chairmaker unidentified; decoration probably by R.H. Ranney (dates unknown)
Ithaca, New York
c. 1817–1825
Paint, bronze-powder stenciling, and gold leaf on wood, with rush seat
37¼ × 21 × 16½"
American Folk Art Museum, promised gift of Ralph Esmerian, P1.2001.72



SIDE CHAIRS
 Possibly Worcester
 Chair Factory
 Worcester County,
 Massachusetts
 1820-1835
 Paint on maple and
 pine
 33¼ × 15¾ × 18" each
 American Folk Art Museum,
 promised gift of Ralph
 Esmerian, P1.2001.73

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JOHN PARNELL

productivity was further increased through the introduction of time-saving techniques such as stenciling, the vogue for Fancy furniture was made affordable to a broader consumer base, becoming the dominant vernacular furniture style.

The so-called Hitchcock chair was developed as an inexpensive response to the heightened demand for Fancy chairs in an Empire style, which typically featured gold elements on rich woods like mahogany. In 1818 Lambert Hitchcock established a chair factory in Riverton, Connecticut, producing parts that were shipped as far away as South Carolina. The factory churned out finished chairs and other furniture forms with distinctive bronze stenciling on dark backgrounds. Hitchcock's marketing strategy—labeling the backs of the chairs with his name and marking them "warranted"—was so successful that even today his name is identified with this type of chair. The crown-top, turtleback *Side Chair* is an early example of Hitchcock's production; it bears the stamp "L. Hitchcock. Hitchcocks-ville. Conn. Warranted," which he used between 1826 and 1829. At this time, such chairs sold for \$1.50, less than half the cost of a Fancy chair of the same period. One reason Hitchcock could price his chairs so inexpensively was that he applied methods of mass production, creating interchangeable chair parts in a limited range of styles. Workmen specialized in one area of production, while the stencil designs were often done by women.

SIDE CHAIR
 Lambert Hitchcock
 (1795-1852)
 Hitchcocks-ville, Connecticut
 1826-1829
 Paint, bronze-powder
 stenciling, and gold leaf on
 wood, with cane seat
 34¾ × 18 × 15"
 American Folk Art Museum,
 gift of the Historical
 Society of Early American
 Decoration, 58.29

Pennsylvania German Furniture

Throughout its history, Philadelphia has been an important American port of entry for people and products. Among those attracted by William Penn's "Holy Experiment" were large numbers of immigrants from Germanic areas throughout Europe who settled in Philadelphia and its environs. In all areas of settlement, from the city to the farthest reaches of rural Pennsylvania, traditional arts were practiced in an unbroken continuum. Paradoxically, the retention of enduring traditions, such as *fraktur* and furniture decoration, was facilitated through the use of innovative materials. Pennsylvania Germans had ready access to the sophisticated and plentiful goods that flooded into Philadelphia on the great ships that docked in her harbor. These goods were often distributed to local dealers such as James Peter, a Lancaster druggist, who in 1764 offered goods imported in the "last vessels at Philadelphia, from London," including pharmaceuticals, spices, perfumes, utensils, gold and silver leaf, and more than a dozen pigments. An analysis of Pennsylvania German *fraktur* has revealed that almost as soon as new colors were invented they appeared in this art form, disproving the notion that the pigments, inks, and other materials used in *fraktur* were homemade.⁹

The application of new pigments depended upon the medium in which the pigment was suspended. In *fraktur*, a calligraphic art executed on paper, the pigments were suspended in water or in gum arabic, producing a transparent, shiny appearance. The same pigments suspended in an oil-based vehicle and mixed with white lead for opacity provided a sturdy medium with the strong coverage appropriate for furniture decoration. Thus, the vibrant greens, yellows, reds, and blues that adorned the important documents marking milestones in the lives of Germanic communities were also used to enliven furniture with similar motifs and identical colors.

A distinctive group of furniture and decorative objects emerged in an area of Germanic settlement around the Schwaben and Mahantango creeks in Pennsylvania. Probably the work of several craftsmen, similar painted motifs evidence a close relationship that may derive from such shared sources as *fraktur* and gravestones. Other painted elements are drawn from broader decorative trends of the period, such as neoclassical striping, urns, and corner quarter-fans.

It is conjectured that one of the major contributors to this regional furniture style was Johannes Mayer, whose home was discovered to contain moldings and trims identical to those used on chests such as the *Chest of Drawers*. When originally painted, it was probably a blue-green color, as the paint is composed primarily of Prussian blue with chrome yellow and whitening. The chest has received six generations of resin varnish that have probably darkened to the bright green we see today.¹⁰

Johannes Spitler was an artisan of Germanic heritage born in the Massanutten area of Virginia (now Page County), which was settled in 1733 by fifty-one German and Swiss pioneers from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Spitler relied upon conventional motifs associated with Germanic arts in America, but he interpreted such common elements as hearts, flowers, and birds in a highly

stylized and unique manner. Most of his work appears on full-size blanket chests and a few smaller storage chests; it is not known whether he constructed the furniture that bears his decoration.¹¹

The *Chest* is one of two nearly identical painted chests that, according to oral history, were made for sisters who lived in adjacent homes on the same farm in Virginia. The designs on this chest are executed in five pigments, ground in oil, that Spitler used consistently: Prussian blue, white lead, red lead, lampblack, and burnt umber. These pigments were all commercially available, and some were relatively new at the time.

An analysis of the paint layers indicates that Spitler covered the entire surface of each piece of furniture with a thin red ground of burnt umber.¹² The motifs were incised into the surface either before or after the application of the ground, using a straightedge, compass, and sometimes templates or stencils as time-saving devices. Prussian blue mixed with white lead was applied last, brushed around the designs; initials and dates were painted freehand. After the decoration was completed, the entire surface was covered with several coats of varnish. ★

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Notes

- 1 Peter M. Kenny, curator of American decorative arts, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, e-mail to the author, July 8, 2005.
- 2 Susan L. Buck, conservator and paint analyst, letter to the author, August 5, 2005.
- 3 Sumpter T. Priddy III, *American Fancy: Exuberance in the Arts, 1790–1840* (Milwaukee: Chipstone Foundation, 2004), p. 73.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 72.
- 5 Cynthia V.A. Schaffner and Susan Klein, *American Painted Furniture* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1997), p. 109.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 125.
- 7 Rebecca M. Rogers, *Trumbull County Clock Industry, 1812–1835* (Dayton, Ohio: National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors, 1991), pp. 19–20.
- 8 Priddy, op. cit., p. 51.
- 9 Janice H. Carlson and John Krill, "Pigment Analysis of Early American Watercolors and *Fraktur*," *Journal of the American Institute of Conservation* 18, no. 1 (1978): 19–32.
- 10 Buck, op. cit.
- 11 Donald Walters, "Johannes Spitler, Shenandoah County, Virginia, Furniture Decorator," *The Magazine Antiques* 108, no. 4 (October 1975): 730, 732.
- 12 Chris Shelton, "Johannes Spitler, a Virginia Furniture Decorator at the Turn of the 19th Century," *WAG Postprints* (Buffalo: Wooden Artifacts Group of the American Institute for Conservation, 1992).



CHEST
Attributed to
Johannes Spitler
(1774–1837)
Shenandoah County,
Virginia
c. 1800
Paint on yellow pine and
walnut, with metal and
wrought-iron hardware
23¼ × 48¼ × 22¼"
American Folk Art
Museum, promised
gift of
Ralph Esmerian,
PI.2001.188



CHEST OF DRAWERS
Probably Johannes Mayer
(1794-1883)
Mahantango or
Schwabens Creek Valley,
Pennsylvania
1830
Paint on pine and
poplar
47½ × 43¾ × 22"
American Folk Art
Museum purchase,
1981.12.3