

Sold November 13, 2004 for \$962,500 by auctioneer Jeff Evans of Green Valley Auctions, Inc.
(now *Jeffrey S. Evans & Associates, Inc.*)

LOT 237:

EXTREMELY IMPORTANT JOHANNES SPITLER (1774-1837) PAINT DECORATED YELLOW PINE HANGING CUPBOARD, SHENANDOAH (NOW PAGE) COUNTY, VIRGINIA, boldly molded cornice applied to a gouge-carved and pricked dentil frieze which in turn is pegged to the dovetailed case which features fluted quarter columns; single molded raised-panel door with applied beading and original exterior flush-mounted brass hinges above a single dovetailed and pegged drawer with applied beading; sides extended into cut-out support for a recessed shelf/well with applied inverted cove molding. Interior fitted with an upper half shelf and an iron door lock which appears to be original. Dry and untouched original paint decorated surface executed in red, white and blue with leaping stag on door panel. Circa 1800. 35" h; case 18 1/2" wide and 12" deep; cornice 25" wide and 15 1/4" deep.

Condition:

Exceptional original condition, door and drawer knobs are old replacements, minor losses to beading on door and drawer.

Estimate:

\$150,000-\$250,000

Provenance:

Property of the Modisett Estate, Page Co., Va.
Descended directly from fraktur artist Jacob Strickler, a relative of Spitler, and has never been out of the Strickler/Modisett family.

Note:

This cupboard, which represents a previously undocumented form decorated by Spitler, was moved in the 1840s from the original Jacob Strickler homestead to the newly-built Modisett home nearby where it was hung in an under-stairs closet and used as the family medicine cabinet. Due to space restraints, its cornice was carefully removed and another without a right side return was added. Remarkably, the original cornice (with five of its nine original nails intact) was kept and stored on top of the cupboard. We have reattached the cornice and added (lightly sunk into original holes) two nails in order to affix securely.

In the 1970s, the Modisett homestead (near the original Johannes Spitler farm) was the source of the signed Spitler tall-case clock now in the collection of the American Folk Art Museum. Ironically, the clock stood against the living room wall while this cupboard hung out of view only a few feet away. The Modisett home was also the source of the Jacob Strickler frakturs now in the collection of the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Center.

A second Spitler decorated tall-case clock at the AARFAC bears a leaping stag decoration which matches the stag found on this cupboard supporting the previously held theory that this particular decoration was executed using a template. Additionally, the similarity of construction details between clock and cupboard suggests that both are from the same cabinet shop.

