that the copyist chose names from different columns in the engrossed Declaration, first concentrating on one column, then another, while interspersing the names of the Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Delaware delegates to make it harder to crack the code. Nowhere do they explain why the code was predicated on columns rather than some other ordering principle, an alphabetical system for example, or a geographical progression from state to state, which might at least have some regional significance. Nowhere do they define the purpose of the code unless it was a means of randomizing the names while ensuring that none of them would be omitted. One would expect a code to contain a confidential message in danger of falling into the wrong hands, but it is unclear what needed to be kept secret on this occasion. The names were not protecting classified information. Instead of making complications, it is better to look for precedents and similar examples, a simple comparison of layout techniques and production methods. An easier explanation can be found in the field of graphic design, a basic skill of the artists who copied the Declaration.

Design considerations often dictated the sequence of signatures. Allen and Sneff are not correct in saying that the Sussex Declaration was the only one to interfere with the state groupings before the publication of the Bridgham print in 1836. The printers of the Boston Bewick facsimile rearranged the states to save on space and make room for the oak and olive frame. A Philadelphia printer moved the signatures out of order in an 1832 broadside reconfigured in a three-column format. After 1836 the signatures frequently appear in random order for no other reason than to fill an area predetermined by the decorative apparatus and the proportions of the page. Just to take one example, an 1845 letterpress broadside starts out with the state groupings but then switches out the signatures to rank them in a five-column format within a border of state seals. The printers disbanded the Maryland delegation and put each of the signatures in a different column.[15]

Like others who made those design decisions, Bridgham's artist sought to achieve a harmonious balance between image and text, a pleasing composition comprising the border of state seals, the calligraphic lettering, and the facsimile signatures. The lettering above and the signatures below were aligned to form two rectangular blocks, each even in weight, each fitting neatly inside the border. The artist allowed a tendril to extend beyond the border to complete the last line of text, a grace note following the phrase "*our* LIVES, *our* FORTUNES, *and our sacred* HONOR." Likewise, the signatures were spaced out to make the line endings flush with the text, even though the emblematic John Hancock had to be compressed, and some signatures lost their final flourishes. Signatures at the beginning and the end of the last line retained their flourishes for a decora-

15. *Declaration of Independence, and Geographical Chart of the U. States of America*, Philadelphia: Published by Thomas Morrison, C.A. Elliott, printer, 1832; *In Congress July 4th. 1776. The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America*, New York: Published and for sale by Humphrey Phelps, No. 4 Spruce-St., opposite City Hall, N. York, 1845. Copies of the Morrison broadside are in the Library of Congress, the American Philosophical Society, the Daniel Hamelberg collection, and the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia. Nine different versions of the Phelps broadside dating from 1845 to ca. 1854–1863 are described in *The Declaration in Script and Print*, item 47.