

Bridgham's design is almost entirely based on the Boston Bewick Company facsimile. The most obvious borrowings can be seen in the facsimile signatures, the state seals in an oak-leaf and olive-wreath border, the curvature of the title, and the "emphatical words" in the text. Some adjustments had to be made to extrapolate these design elements from a large letterpress broadside, and there was one change in iconography—a portrait of Washington was substituted for the national seal—but Bridgham was clearly indebted to his former employer for the concept and layout of his facsimile. Surely it is no coincidence that he published it just after he left that firm. Intaglio was not his medium, but he would have learned about it while on the job and would have understood its potential for delineating fine detail in miniatures. His model, the letterpress broadside, he would have known from hands-on experience in the stereotype foundry or the pressroom. The Boston Bewick Company gave him the means and the motivation to take on this project at a turning point in his career.

The timing of his publication could not have been better. In 1837 a Boston gallery presented a life-size tableau of mannequins reenacting the ratification of the Declaration, each of the fifty-six Signers dressed in period costume. A broadside advertisement assured the public that it was not a painting, although the scene seems to have been based on Trumbull's *Declaration of Independence*. The Committee of Five takes center stage, Franklin to the left of Jefferson, Adams to his right, Livingston and Sherman behind them, while Jefferson submits the committee's text to the president of Congress. This inspiring spectacle could be seen for twenty-five cents, children half price, from eight in the morning until ten at night. If anyone wanted to take away a souvenir, the Bridgham facsimile would have been easily available at that time and just the right size for that purpose. Indeed it was reprinted in 1839 with the border reworked yet again to change the title and replace the Washington portrait with Trumbull's *Declaration*.¹¹

The text portion of Bridgham's print determined the lettering in another Boston edition, which also incorporated Trumbull's *Declaration*. Published by the Franklin Print Company in 1838, this one was more than twice the size of the miniature, with a more elaborate oak-leaf border containing twenty-six state seals, the national seal, and portraits of the presidents. It contains a competent reproduction of the Asher B. Durand print after Trumbull's first version of the painting (to be precise, the painting now in the Yale University Art Gallery, not the second version in the Capitol Rotunda or the third version in the Wadsworth Atheneum) as well as a key to the print consisting of forty-eight numbered outline figures. Numbered facsimile signatures identify each of the figures. The Franklin Print Company credited the pictorial part to the engraver Denison Kimberly, the lettering to John B. Bolton. Although reformatted for different proportions,

11. *The Great National Exhibition of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence*, Boston: W. W. Clapp, 1837; *In the Continental Congress, of 1776, on the 4th. of July, The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America*, Boston: Published by N. Dearborn & Son—53 Washington St. Boston, & 164 Broad Way, New York, 1839. As yet the only copy I have found in this state is at the New-York Historical Society, although the Library Company of Philadelphia has an undated variant with the imprint: Published by N. Dearborn. No. 53 Washington St. Boston.