

words emphasized in special scripts. The Binns signatures, however, mystified the lithographer who misspelled fourteen of the fifty-six names, mainly those that were hard to read. The New York lithographer committed mistakes not unlike those of the Sussex copyist: WITHERSPOART for Witherspoon, HOYG for Floyd, PINN for Penn, and M KEAN for M: Kean. Both had to contend with facsimile signatures, but even an immigrant poorly schooled in English was able to construe common names such as Harrison and Stockton.¹⁶

The copyist's mistakes are easier to explain if they can be imputed to the illegibility of his source and his failure to find a remedy. Some delegates scrawled their signatures in such a way as to make them difficult to read even in a full-size facsimile. Bridgham's miniature exacerbated the problem. Published sixty years after the fact, it was conceived as a novelty and was never intended to be an authoritative text, but it circulated widely and could easily come into the hands of someone whose notions of the American Revolution were more sentimental than scholarly. The copyist transcribed it by rote and relied on his imagination to interpret the parts he did not understand. He was unwilling or unable to find a better source for this display of penmanship and did not worry overmuch about the accuracy of his work.

Complications. A line of reasoning should follow the shortest distance between two points. That common-sense rule is a deciding factor for testing hypotheses in bibliographical investigations—or any field of intellectual inquiry. The complications in Allen and Sneff's arguments undercut their claims for the priority of the Sussex Declaration. If it came first and served as a source for the Bridgham facsimile, we would have to believe that the Bostonians copied the same order of names while consulting another source to render them in facsimile. We would have to believe that they took the oversize words in that manuscript as cues to execute the same words in ornamental penmanship even though they had the Boston Bewick edition easily at hand and could use that as a model for the "emphatical words." We would have to accept the hypothesis that the Sussex Declaration or a derivative manuscript influenced Tyler's choice of "emphatical words" sometime around 1818 and then resurfaced eighteen years later to guide the work of the Bostonians. If we follow that line of reasoning, we would have to imagine that James Wilson was willing to overlook the atrocious spelling of the names even though he depended on them to affirm his position during the debates on the Constitution and could have corrected them on the basis of personal

16. *Declaration of Independence. In Congress, at Philadelphia, July 4th, 1776*, Philadelphia: Published by I. Kohler, No. 104 North Fourth Street, 1855; *New-York City & County Map with Vicinity Entire Brooklyn Williamsburgh Jersey City &c. in the 79th. Year of the Independence of the United States*, New-York: Published by Chs. Magnus, 12. Frankfurt Street, ca. 1855. A copy of the Kohler broadside is at the American Antiquarian Society; copies of a German version with the same mistakes are at the Library Company of Philadelphia and in the Daniel Hamelberg collection. Magnus also issued the Declaration in a two-leaf brochure. A copy of the map is in the Princeton University Library; copies of the brochure are at the American Antiquarian Society, the Library Company of Philadelphia, and the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia.