

pleted; though possibly some of the incomplete sets extant, may, if brought into the market, help out a few others. It would seem that the source of supply of the Lynch signatures is practically exhausted, and perhaps the Gwinnett also. Dr. Gilman stated, in April, 1845, that the Misses Bowman informed him, that a large trunk of the papers of their uncle, Thomas Lynch Jr., had, a few years previously been deposited for safety with their kinsman, Gen. James Hamilton, and were destroyed by the burning of his residence. They added, that they had been accustomed, when they went into the country, to place that trunk, with its precious contents, in the bank; but had unfortunately on that occasion, deviated from their usual custom. Other Southern signatures, notably those of Middleton and Heyward, seem almost as difficult of procurement.

Intimately connected with a collection of autographs of the signers, are copies of the engraved portraits and views of the residences of the writers, for their proper illustration. Such engravings, judiciously selected, and properly mounted, add vastly to the interest and attractiveness of any set of the signers—indeed, they are quite indispensable.

As early as 1787, while our distinguished American painter, Col. John Trumbull, was yet in Europe, he seems to have formed the design of his great national picture of the signers—probably then painting Adams and Jefferson, our respective representatives at the courts of Great Britain and France, and probably obtaining their suggestions. In 1789, he painted portraits of such signers as were then in Congress; or, as he has recorded it in his autobiography, "I arranged carefully the composition for the 'Declaration of Independence,' and prepared it for receiving the portraits as I met with the distinguished men who were present at that illustrious scene." Again, in 1790, he records: "In May, I went to Philadelphia, where I obtained some portraits for my great work." In September, after passing some time in the country, he went to Boston and New Hampshire in quest of heads; and, in 1791, he says, "in February, I went to Charlestown, South Carolina, and there obtained portraits of the Rutledges, Pinckneys, Middletons, Laurens, Heyward, etc.