



Robert R. Livingston

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ONE OF THE MOST PROMINENT statesmen of his day, Robert Livingston came from a most illustrious family. Born in New York City on November 27, 1746, Livingston spent his early years there. He entered King's College (Columbia University) at the age of 15. There he befriended John Jay, with whom he later had a brief partnership. Livingston served from 1775 to 1777 in the Continental Congress, where he was one of the five drafters of the Declaration of Independence. At the time the Declaration was signed, however, he had returned to duties in the provincial assembly.

When the government of New York State was established, Livingston became chancellor, the highest judicial position in the state, and served for 24 years. In that capacity he administered the oath of office to President Washington in 1789. From 1781 to 1783, as secretary of foreign affairs, Livingston transmitted news of European affairs to the Congress. From 1801 to 1804 he served as President Jefferson's minister to France and negotiated the Louisiana Purchase. While living in Paris Livingston met Robert Fulton; he later supported the inventor's construction of the steamboat *Clermont*, named for Livingston's estate.

Livingston's last years were spent experimenting with new agricultural techniques and raising sheep. Before his death on February 27, 1813, he also founded and became the first president of the American Academy of Fine Arts and became a trustee of the New York Society Library.

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Bronze by Erastus Dow Palmer
Given in 1875; located in Crypt.

