

Personal Background

You were born in 1752 to a wealthy family in New York. Early in life, you lost a leg in a carriage accident. You were well educated as a youth. After graduating from King's College in New York City, you studied law and became a lawyer. When the Revolution began, many of your friends were Loyalists. Although you worried about mob rule, you sided with the Patriots. You served in the militia and helped to draft New York's state constitution. You also served in the state legislature and the Continental Congress. In 1779, you moved to Philadelphia, where you again practiced law.

A colorful and forceful speaker, you are one of the most active speakers at the Constitutional Convention.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention

Issue 1: You think the national legislature should have two houses. In the first house, all states should have an equal vote. In the second house, representation should be based on the amount of property and wealth a state has, as well as the size of its population.

Issue 2: You oppose counting slaves when determining representation in the national legislature or the taxes to be paid by a state.

Issue 3: You believe that the national executive should be elected directly by the people, but you are willing to consider other options.

Sign the Constitution? Yes.