

James Duane

James Duane, a political figure in the American Revolution, was born in 1733 in New York City to Anthony Duane and Althea Keteltas. When his parents died, he was adopted by a prominent American aristocrat, Robert Livingston. Upon his admission to the bar in 1754, Duane soon gained renown and wealth as a lawyer. He married Livingston's eldest daughter, Mary, in 1759. Although he took a cautious approach in the prerevolutionary troubles in New York City, his sincere interest in colonial rights won him a seat in the Continental Congress in 1774, where he served until 1783. His support of Joseph Galloway's conciliatory plan and his habitual caution in Congress caused numerous attacks on his patriotism. He served on various Revolutionary committees and helped draft the Articles of Confederation. Toward the close of the war Duane was a member of George Clinton's council and from 1784 to 1789 served as mayor of New York City. He was at the same time state senator and was a member of the convention that ratified the U.S. Constitution. From 1789 until his retirement in 1794, he was U.S. district judge for New York. Duane, who invested heavily in land in Vermont and Western New York, was long an ardent advocate of New York's claims to the New Hampshire Grants. His last years were spent in Duanesburg, which he was chiefly responsible for establishing in 1765. He died in Schenectady in 1797 and is buried in a vault underneath Christ Episcopal Church in Duanesburg.

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