

John Sloss Hobart

New York City and County

Born: May 6, 1738, Fairfield, CT

As a former member of the Sons of Liberty, your devotion to the patriot cause was absolute; and as a prominent jurist today, your determination to see the Constitution ratified is no less complete.

You are John Sloss Hobart, born May 6, 1738, to the Reverend Noah Hobart and Ellen Sloss Hobart in Fairfield, Connecticut. Your grandfather was the Reverend Peter Hobart, son of Edmund Hobart, who emigrated from England in 1635, settling in Hingham, Massachusetts. You though are tied mainly to Suffolk County, Long Island, courtesy of an inheritance from your mother's family, the Slosses, specifically Eaton's Neck in the town of Huntington.

You attended Yale College, graduating in 1757. Afterward you studied law and were admitted to the bar, starting your legal practice in New York City. In 1764 you married Mary Greenhill and set about building a home on Eaton's Neck, called Cherry Lawn, where you raised cattle and sheep.

Your political career began about the same time. You were a member of the Stamp Act Congress, which convened in New York in October 1765 to protest Parliament's stamp tax. Later in the prewar years you served on the Suffolk County committee of correspondence (1774), organized to implement assorted boycotts of British trade, and as a member of the Provincial Convention (1775), which selected New York's delegates to the Second Continental Congress. The convention was succeeded by a series of congresses, and you attended all four (1775–77). While there, you were liaison to army units stationed on Long Island (until their defeat at the Battle of Brooklyn). Additionally, you were a member of the first committee of safety, the executive arm of these congresses; a member of the committee that composed the resolution to approve the Declaration of Independence; a member of the committee that reported the new state constitution; and a member of the committee that devised the great seal of the state. When the state government began operations in 1777, you were appointed an associate (puisne) justice of the Supreme Court of Judicature; John Jay was the chief justice. In 1780 you represented Suffolk County at an interstate conference in Hartford, called "to give vigour to the governing powers, equal to the present crisis"—i.e., the war effort, which in 1780 was faring quite badly. But the war in due course was won, and after the withdrawal of British troops (November 1783), and while waiting for the state government to reestablish its control, you served in a temporary government for the southern district, providing law and order to the counties of New York, Richmond, Kings, Queens, Suffolk, and Westchester.

In the years since, you have continued to serve on the bench. Your reputation as a jurist has caused you to be elected this spring a delegate to the New York State Ratifying Convention on the Federalist ticket representing New York City and County. You thus will give hearty support to Chancellor Robert Livingston (party leader) and Alexander Hamilton (party lieutenant), as they, and others of your party, endeavor to ensure that New York votes to ratify the Constitution.