

Moderate

Jacobus Swartwout

Dutchess County

Born: November 5, 1734, Fishkill, NY

You are Jacobus (Jacob) Swartwout, born November 5, 1734, to Jacobus Swartwout and Gieletjen "Jannetje" Nieuwkerk in Wicopee, Fishkill, New York. You belong to a military family. Your father was a major in the light foot militia of Orange County from the 1730s to 1760, and twenty-nine of your cousins, siblings, and sons served in the Revolutionary War. Your career began with the French and Indian War, when three weeks after your wedding in 1759, you commenced training under Lord Jeffrey Amherst at Fort Ticonderoga and Crown Point and were later appointed captain of a company of Dutchess County militia.

When relations with Britain fractured in the 1770s, you were among the first to join the patriot cause—not immediately as a soldier, however, but as a spy catcher. The First Continental Congress, in September 1774, called for the establishment of committees of observation in each county. You were made deputy chairman of the Fishkill committee. This later became the Committee for Detecting and Defeating Conspiracies (1776), charged with collecting intelligence, apprehending and interrogating spies and loyalist sympathizers, and imprisoning or deporting the convicted. Enforcement rested with a company of militia operating under your command. The Provincial Congress renamed the committee a commission in February 1777 and placed you, Egbert Benson, and Melancton Smith on its board.

You were appointed colonel of the First Regiment Dutchess County in 1776. The Swartwout Regiment, so called, saw action at the battles of Brooklyn, Fort Washington, Fort Independence, and White Plains. For the remainder of the war, the regiment formed part of the Northern Department. Your home served as the headquarters for Baron von Steuben and was visited by General Washington, Marquis de Lafayette, and Israel Putnam. In 1780, you were promoted to brigadier general of the Dutchess County militia.

Your political career has consisted of five years on the governor's council of appointment (1784–88), six years in the state assembly (1777–82), and six years in the state senate (1783–88). You are the very sort of career politician whom the Federalists say oppose ratification because an effective national government might diminish the significance of your local office. They are right—in your case.

Game Play Instructions

Consult the Moderate role sheet for your primary instructions.

You are the Moderate liaison who cooperates with the Antifederalist party, led by Governor George Clinton and Melancton Smith. As liaison, you are more set in your views than the other Moderates, who are fully indeterminate and free to vote as they see fit. You, by contrast, will vote with the Antifederalists, including voting to reject the Constitution, if rated Antifederalist by the instructor. Your job is twofold: (1) to recruit Moderates to the Antifederalist side and (2) to persuade your recruits to join in the debates that follow formal speechmaking with questions, comments, or declarations supportive of Antifederalist positions. Those speaking in debate double their votes on the issues to which they speak. You double your vote for the final vote if the Constitution is rated Antifederalist by the instructor.

It is paramount that the other Moderates operate as fair-minded judges of the speeches and proposals offered by others, honest brokers without interests or objectives of their own. Thus your only tool of persuasion is persuasion itself—no deals, bribes, or threats. Take your arguments from *An Address to the People of the State of New York* by "A Plebeian."

Because you don't write and deliver speeches (not enough time), you instead take a short exam, before the start of the game, based on the Gordon Wood reading found in the game book. The exam winner(s) casts an extra vote throughout the game, including the final vote to ratify or reject the Constitution.

