

Moderate

John Cantine

Ulster County

Born: October 20, 1735, Marbletown, Ulster County

You are John Cantine, born October 20, 1735, in Marbletown, Ulster County, New York. You have two brothers, Matthew and Peter. Both have enjoyed modest political success: Matthew was a delegate to the convention that ratified the state constitution (1777); Peter was a member of the state assembly (1787).

Your claim to fame is near-continuous representation of Ulster County in the state assembly (1777–78, 1779–81, 1783–85, 1786–88). The Ulster voters reelected you this spring, while also electing you a delegate to the New York State Ratifying Convention meeting in Poughkeepsie to accept or reject the Constitution.

Ulster is Antifederalist territory and home to Governor George Clinton. You ran on the Antifederalist ticket (and could not have been elected otherwise). But you are less adamant than your colleagues. Indeed, you are a Moderate, open to the idea of ratification and frightened at the prospect of New York's remaining outside the union.

Game Play Instructions

Consult the Moderate role sheet for your primary instructions.

Moderates as a group are intended to be fair-minded judges of the speeches and proposals offered by others, honest brokers without interests or objectives of their own. In fact, the power lies with you to determine if the Constitution is ratified or rejected. The formal factions, Federalists and Antifederalists, are equal in number and will largely cancel each other out.

But you may divide into two parties, because among you are two delegates resolved to move the Moderates into the Federalist or Antifederalist camp — Jonathan N. Havens for the Federalists and Jacobus Swartwout for the Antifederalists. Listen to the liaisons and listen to the arguments. Then cast your votes, issue by issue, favoring what you believe to be the better arguments. You may go back and forth; strength on one issue might not carry over to another. Your best judgment is what the game is asking of you.

Also your participation in debate: you double your vote on any issue to which you make a substantive contribution. Needless to say, participation will improve your grade.

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.