

**A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF
ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON. READ
BEFORE THE N.Y. HISTORICAL
SOCIETY, OCTOBER 3, 1876**

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A biographical sketch of Robert R. Livingston. Read before the N.Y. Historical Society, October 3, 1876 by Frederic De Peyster

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FREDERIC DE PEYSTER

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Peter the Younger

A
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
OF
ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

READ BEFORE THE N. Y. HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
OCTOBER 3, 1876,

BY THE PRESIDENT,

FREDERIC DE PEYSTER, LL.D.
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NEW YORK:
PUBLISHED FOR THE SOCIETY.
MDCCLXXVI.

At a stated meeting of the NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY, held in its Hall, on Tuesday Evening, December 5, 1876, the following recommendation, presented by the Executive Committee, was unanimously adopted :

The Executive Committee respectfully recommend to the Society, that the President be invited to deposit in the archives of the Society a copy of his biographical sketch, accompanying the gift of Vanderlyn's portrait of Chancellor Livingston, for publication.

Extract from the Minutes.

ANDREW WARNER,
Recording Secretary.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
OF
ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

THE Portrait of ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON, first Chancellor of the State of New York, which has this evening been presented to the New York Historical Society by Mrs. Thomson Livingstone, an American lady, now residing in Paris, represents this distinguished gentleman in the court-dress worn by him when representing the United States as their Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court of France during the consulate of the First Napoleon.

There are doubtless many persons present this evening who are unacquainted with his character and public services, to whom a brief sketch will be of interest. I propose, therefore, to present the principal facts in his public career, and shall touch,

incidentally, upon the history of the family of Livingston. Before proceeding with this biographical sketch, it may be well first to make a brief statement regarding this portrait, and the artist who painted it.

The admirable portrait now before you is the work of John Vanderlyn, the noted painter, who was born at Kingston, Ulster county, New York, in October, 1776, and who died there September 23d, 1852. His rudimentary instruction in art was received from Gilbert Stuart, in New York, when about sixteen years of age. By the aid of Aaron Burr he visited Paris in 1796, for improvement in painting. He returned five years thereafter to New York, and in 1803 revisited Europe, remaining there till 1815. It was in the interval between these last-mentioned dates that he made excellent copies of some of the paintings by the "Old Masters;" but he was more distinguished by his well-known paintings, "The Murder of Jane McCrea by the Indians," and "The Ariadne," the latter a justly celebrated work of art, and the first successful representation, by an American artist, of a mythological subject. Among his other works was the well-known picture, "Marius sitting among the Ruins of Carthage;" which received the high honor of the Gold Medal at the Paris Exhibition in 1808; and it is said, on the authority of Chancellor Livingston, that when the Emperor Napoleon first saw it in this