

Savannah Congress Coaster Set #2 – Colony



Midway - Midway's history dates back to Puritans migrating to St. John's Parish, Georgia, from Dorchester, South Carolina, in 1752 and established several settlements, including what became the Midway community. The Council of Georgia granted them 31,950 acres, as colonial officials wanted a large number of settlers in the area to help protect them from the Creek Indians. The original Midway settlers were primarily rice planters and developed a strong agricultural economy, aided by the 1,500 slaves they brought from South Carolina. No Parish was more pro liberty. Midway Patriots urged others to join the revolt. Dr. Lyman Hall was the foremost advocate for freedom in the colony of Georgia, and was selected as their delegate to the 2nd Continental Congress. Five counties in Georgia are named for patriots from the Midway Community; John Baker, Button Gwinnett, Lyman Hall, James Scriven, and Daniel Stewart.

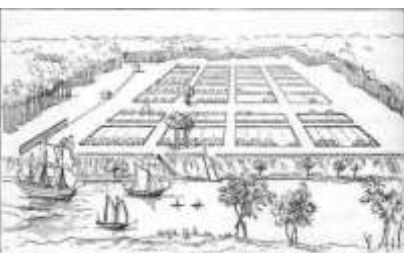
The Midway Congregational Church is a small historic wooden church built in 1792 to replace an earlier church building that had been burned by the British during the Revolutionary War. Its historic cemetery also dates from the 18th century. Notable Georgians buried in it include Governor and Congressman Nathan Brownson and early U.S. Senator John Elliott.



Oglethorpe - James Edward Oglethorpe was a British soldier, Member of Parliament, and philanthropist, as well as the founder of the colony of Georgia. Oglethorpe chaired a Parliamentary committee on prison reform. He hoped to resettle Britain's worthy poor in the New World.

Oglethorpe and the Trustees formulated a plan for the settlement of Georgia. Land ownership was limited to fifty acres. Self-supporting colonists were able to obtain larger fifty-acre increments tied to the number of indentured servants supported by the grantee. Servants would receive a land grant of their own upon completing their term of service. No one was permitted to acquire additional land through purchase or inheritance. The colony was originally anti-slavery, but economic pressures eventually led to the lifting of the ban. Slavery was indispensable to the rise of large cotton-growing plantations throughout the Deep South.

The cotton seeds given to Oglethorpe (and his colony's success in growing cotton) were instrumental in establishing the cotton industry in the U.S. South. Oglethorpe settled near the present site of Savannah, Georgia, and negotiated with the Yamacraw Chief Tomochichi, and built a series of defensive forts, most notably Fort Frederica. Georgia was a key contested area, lying in between the English Carolinas and Spanish Florida. It was Oglethorpe's idea that British debtors should be released from prison and sent to Georgia. Many of Georgia's new settlers consisted of poor English tradesmen and artisans and religious refugees from Switzerland, France and Germany, as well as a number of Jewish refugees. The colony's charter provided for acceptance of all religions except Roman Catholicism. The ban on Roman Catholic settlers was based on the colony's proximity to the hostile settlements in Spanish Florida.



Savannah Map - Established in 1733 on the Savannah River, the city of Savannah became the British colonial capital of the Province of Georgia and later the first state capital of Georgia. Oglethorpe's farsightedness included the city of Savannah being laid out in a series of grids allowing for wide streets and public squares. Considered America's first planned city, Savannah had 24 original squares with 22 still in existence today. A strategic port city in the American Revolution.



Nancy Hart - Nancy Morgan Hart was a patriot heroine of the American Revolutionary War. Hart was said to be a hotheaded with a fearless spirit, and a penchant for exacting vengeance upon those who offended her family and friends. She is characterized as a tough, resourceful frontier woman who repeatedly outsmarted Tory soldiers, and outright killed some. Stories about her are mostly unsupported and has become impossible for anyone to entirely distinguish fact from folklore.

According to contemporary accounts, "Aunt Nancy," was a tall, gangly woman, rough-hewn and rawboned, with red hair and a face scarred by smallpox. One early account said that Hart had "no share of beauty—a fact she herself would have readily acknowledged, had she ever enjoyed an opportunity of looking into a mirror."

She had a total of six sons and two daughters. Illiterate, Hart was amply blessed with the skills and knowledge necessary for frontier survival. She was an expert herbalist, a skilled hunter, and an excellent shooter. A group of five or six Tory soldiers came by the Hart house looking for food and a Whig they were pursuing. The soldiers demanded that Hart cook them one of her turkeys, and she agreed to feed them. Entering the cabin, they placed their muskets by the door. As they ate, she surreptitiously passed their guns to her daughter through a hole in the wall of the cabin. She grabbed one of the remaining guns and ordered the men to stay still. One rushed her, and she shot and killed him. Another moved toward the remaining weapons, and she killed him as well. She held the rest of the captives until her husband and neighbors arrived. Her husband wanted to shoot the soldiers outright, but she demanded that they be hanged, which was accomplished from a nearby tree. In 1912 construction crews grading a railroad site less than a mile from the old Hart Cabin, found five or six skeletons buried neatly in a row. A few of the skeletons' necks were broken, which suggested they had been hanged. They were determined to have been buried for at least 100 years.

Once when Nancy was taking a bag of grain to the mill, a band of Tories forced her off her horse and threw the grain to the ground. Undaunted, Hart picked up the heavy bag and walked the rest of the way to the mill. Nancy Hart was said to have acted as a sniper, killing Tories as they came across the Broad River. Another time during the war, Nancy was cooking lye soap in her cabin when her daughter discovered a spy looking through a crack in the wall. Hart threw a ladle of the boiling soap into the spy's eyes, went outside and tied him up, and turned him over to the local Patriot militia. Two accounts say that Nancy dressed as a man in order to enter Tory camps, where she could overhear talk and observe the layouts and other elements of military value. According to folklore, the local Native Americans referred to her as "Wahatche" which translates to "War Woman".



Pirates House - Pirates' House was built on a plot located on the east side of Oglethorpe's original city plan. Originally assigned to become a botanical garden, Oglethorpe recruited botanists from around the world to acquire plants for the project, such as cotton, spices, indigo, and medicinal herbs. The garden was hoped to bring success in the wine and silk industries but Georgia was not compatible with mulberry trees. The garden was highly successful in growing cotton, which later became a staple of Georgia's economy.

A small building, which later became the starting structure of Pirates' House, was built on the plot to house the gardener who worked there. This building was deemed the Herb House and is said to be the oldest building in the state of Georgia. In 1754, the people of Savannah decided the need for the botanical garden was no longer relevant. As port town, the Herb House was transformed into an inn and tavern for seamen visiting from abroad. Drunk seamen and criminals would drink at the bar until they passed out. When they woke up, they found themselves on a ship in the middle of the sea.

Pirates, others label them as sea captains unwilling to waste time in recruitment, dragged these unsavory patrons down to the Rum Cellar in the basement of The Pirate's House, before bringing them through the secret tunnel and out onto River Street and put on a ship. This led to visits by Robert Louis Stevenson, and inspiration for Treasure Island. Some rare early edition pages of Treasure Island can be seen hanging on the walls.