

## Savannah Congress Coaster Set #3 – Georgia Heroes

**Elijah Clarke** - Information about Elijah Clarke's life is sparse and at times contradictory. Born in North Carolina, he migrated to the frontier of Georgia. Clarke led a part of the American force that surprised and defeated a loyalist militia at the Battle of Kettle Creek. After the British capture of Charleston in 1780, Clarke participated in guerilla campaigns against the British in the South Carolina backcountry. Clarke would go on to serve in Georgia's legislature. Clarke attempted to create an independent *Trans-Oconee Republic* west of the Oconee River on land promised to the Creek Indians. Under pressure from President George Washington, the state of Georgia sent 1,200 militiamen to expel Clarke and his supporters. Clarke surrendered without a fight after receiving a promise of amnesty.

General Elijah Clark, "Hero of the Hornet's Nest," and members of his family are buried in the enclosed cemetery at Elijah Clark Memorial State Park, Lincolnton, Ga. Their graves were moved twice from their original burial place to prevent inundation by the Clark Hill Lake, and again with the establishment of Elijah Clark Memorial State Park in 1955.



**Andrew Pickens** - One of South Carolina's most daunting Revolutionary War heroes. Pickens began his military career fighting the Cherokee in the Anglo-Cherokee War. he was well-respected by tribal leaders. They called him "Skyagunsta" – or Wizard Owl. Pickens initially served as a militia company commander for Ninety Six District and campaigned against Tories in late 1775. The most severe check of the Loyalists in the backcountry came on February 14, 1779, when patriots crushed the Loyalist force at Kettle Creek, Georgia. After the surrender of Charleston, Pickens accepted British a parole to his home. He renounced protection, when the British failed to prevent a Loyalist band from plundering his plantation.

At the Battle of Cowpens, he was in charge of the South Carolina militia during the decisive victory over Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton's forces. Afterward, Pickens was named a brigadier general by Governor John Rutledge and cooperated with General Nathanael Greene's objective of isolating British posts in the South Carolina interior. Wounded at the Battle of Eutaw Springs, Pickens recovered to fight two more campaigns against the Cherokee.



General Andrew Pickens served as a US representative, and as a federal commissioner to negotiate peace independently with the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, and Creek Indians. Andrew Pickens is buried at the Old Stone Presbyterian Church in Clemson.

**Casimir Pulaski** – Born in Poland, by 1776, Pulaski learned of America's struggle for independence and offered his services to the cause. He led the American colonists create their first true legion on horseback, comprised of Americans, German, Frenchmen, Irishmen, and Poles; Pulaski Legion. This earned him his place as "The Father of the American Cavalry." Congress promoted Pulaski to the rank of Brigadier General in command of the cavalry. The legion would see action along the New Jersey coast and Pennsylvania before heading south.

The Pulaski Legion helped defend Charleston, SC. against the British at Sullivan Island. By fall, the Pulaski Legion headed toward Savannah, GA. in an effort to join French and American troops in an attempt to retake Savannah. At the Battle of Savannah, while leading a cavalry charge against the British, he was fatally wounded by grapeshot blast from a cannon. Pulaski's enemies were so impressed with his courage, that they permitted him to be carried from the battlefield. Pulaski would die two days later aboard the American ship "*Wasp*" in route to Charleston. Pulaski was buried at sea near where the Savannah River flows into the Atlantic.





**Nathanael Greene** - sometimes misspelled Nathaniel, Greene was a major general of the Continental Army in the American Revolutionary War. He emerged from the war with a reputation as General George Washington's most gifted and dependable officer, and is known for his successful command in the southern theater of the war.

Born into a prosperous Quaker family, Greene became a general in the newly-established Continental Army. Greene served under Washington in the Boston campaign, the New York, New Jersey, and Philadelphia campaigns.

In 1780, General Washington appointed him Commander of the Continental Army in the southern theater. Greene engaged in a running campaign of guerrilla warfare that was successful against the numerically superior forces of General Charles Cornwallis. Heavy losses were inflicted on the British at the Battle of Guilford Court House, the Battle of Hobkirk's Hill, and the Battle of Eutaw Springs.

British control of the South ended following the surrender of Cornwallis at the Battle of Yorktown in October 1781. After the war, he sought to become a successful southern planter, but died in 1786 at his Mulberry Grove Plantation in Chatham County, Georgia. For a century, his remains were interred at the Graham Vault in Colonial Park Cemetery in Savannah, until efforts from Rhode Island Society of the Cincinnati moved his remains to a monument in Johnson Square.



**Lachlan McIntosh** - McIntosh's family moved to Georgia in 1736 with a group of 100 Scottish settlers. He studied surveying and acquired land in the Altamaha River delta becoming a prosperous rice planter.

McIntosh became a leader in the independence movement. Commissioned a colonel in the Georgia Militia, he raised the 1st Georgia Regiment of the Georgia Line, organized the defense of Savannah, and helped repel a British assault at the Battle of the Rice Boats in the Savannah River. Promoted to brigadier general in the Continental Army, McIntosh was charged with defense of Georgia's southern flank with British Florida.

Button Gwinnett, the Speaker of the Georgia Provisional Congress and a radical Whig leader's personal rivalry with McIntosh began when McIntosh succeeded Gwinnett as commander of Georgia's Continental Battalion. The two men represented opposing factions in a deeply divided Patriot movement in Georgia. Gwinnett, thwarted in military ambitions, became a delegate to the Continental Congress and signed the Declaration of Independence. Returning to Georgia after his allies gained control of the Provisional Congress and elected him speaker. Shortly afterward, he was elected Georgia's president. Gwinnett began purging his political rivals. Gwinnett had George McIntosh, Lachlan's brother, arrested and charged with treason against the revolution. In Gwinnett ordered Lachlan to lead a poorly planned military expedition into Florida. The operation was a disaster. Each publicly blamed the other for the failure.

Lachlan McIntosh addressed the Georgia assembly and denounced Gwinnett calling him a "scoundrel and lying rascal." Gwinnett sent a written challenge to McIntosh demanding an apology or satisfaction. McIntosh refused to apologize, and Gwinnett challenged him to a duel. They met to duel with pistols. At 12 paces, the two men fired simultaneously. Gwinnett received a ball to the thigh and McIntosh was struck in the leg. McIntosh would recover from his wounds, but Gwinnett died three days later. McIntosh, charged with murder, was acquitted and George Washington, fearing revenge, ordered him to report to Continental Army HQ. He spent the winter at Valley Forge, where he commanded regiments of North Carolina.

Washington ordered McIntosh to return to the south to join General Benjamin Lincoln in Charleston. He marched to Augusta, in command of the Georgia troops, and then proceeded to Savannah, where he commanded the 1st and 5th South Carolina regiments during the siege.

After the battle, he retired his troops to Charleston where General Lincoln was forced to surrender, and McIntosh was taken prisoner until he was exchanged. McIntosh returned to his plantation to find it ruined by the occupying British. McIntosh tried to restore his property and business, but spent the rest of his life in poverty. In 1791, he was part of the delegation that officially welcomed President George Washington to Georgia. McIntosh is buried at Colonial Park Cemetery in Savannah's historic district.