

# An Assembly of Demigods

## Charles Cotesworth Pinckney

### **William Pierce: Sketches of Members of the Constitutional Convention**

Mr. Chs. Cotesworth Pinckney is a Gentleman of Family and fortune in his own State. He has received the advantage of a liberal education, and possesses a very extensive degree of legal knowledge. When warm in a debate he sometimes speaks well,—but he is generally considered an indifferent Orator. Mr. Pinckney was an Officer of high rank in the American army, and served with great reputation through the War. He is now about 40 years of age.

### **George Washington: Opinion of General Officers, March 9, 1792**

A Colonel since Sept. 16th, 1776; but appointed a Brigadier by brevet at the close of the War, *only*. In this gentleman many valuable qualities are to be found. He is of unquestionable bravery. Is a man of strict honor, erudition and good sense: and it is said has made Tactics a study. But what his spirit for enterprise is, whether active or indolent; or fitted for arrangement, I am unable to say, never having had any opportunity to form a judgment of his talents as a Military character. The capture of Charleston put an end to his Military Service: but his junior Rank, and being little known in this part of the Union, are the two considerations most opposed to him; particularly the latter, as it is more than probable his being a prisoner prevented his promotion: which ought not to be any bar to his ranking as a Brigadier from the time that others of his standing as a Colonel, were promoted.

### **Oliver Wolcott, Jr. to George Cabot, Philadelphia, March 27, 1797**

In point of rank, General Pinckney was invested with a character *equal* to that enjoyed by Mr. Jay, and was moreover designated, as has been shown, as the *messenger of conciliation*.

### **Alexander Hamilton to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., New York, April 5, 1797**

*Pinckney* is a man of honor & loves his Country.

### **William Vans Murray to John Marshall, The Hague, September 2, 1797**

General Pinckney (as well as I am) is very anxious to see you. You will find him a clear-sighted and honorable man, & of pleasing friendly manners. He knows you well, though he never saw you, & is prepared to appreciate everything good about you with cordiality & partiality.

**George Washington to Henry Knox, Mount Vernon, July 16, 1798**

General Pinckney's character as an active, spirited and intelligent Officer you are acquainted with, and know that it stands very high in the Southern Hemisphere; it being understood *there*, that he made Tactics as much, if not more his study, than any Officer in the American Army during the last War. His character in other respects, in that quarter before his late Embassy, was also high; and throughout the Union it has acquired celebrity by his conduct as Minister & Envoy. His connections are numerous—their influence extensive; but most of all, with me, when to these considerations I add, as my *decided* opinion (for reasons unnecessary to enumerate) that if the French intend an Invasion of this Country *in Force*, their operations will commence South of Maryland; probably of Virginia; you will see at once the importance of embarking this Gentleman and all his connections *heartily* in the active scenes that would follow, instead of damping their ardour, and thereby giving more activity to the leaven that is working to others, where unity of sentiment would be most desirable.