Chapter 8 Key Terms

Second Continental Congress (1775 – 1781): Representative body of delegates from all thirteen colonies. Drafted Declaration of Independence and managed the colonial war effort.

Ethan Allen – captured Fort Ticonderoga and its gunpowder and artillery used in siege of Boston

Battle of Bunker Hill (June 1775): Fought on the outskirts of Boston, on Breed’s Hill, the battle ended in the colonial militia’s retreat, though at a heavy cost to the British.

Olive Branch Petition (July 1775): Conciliatory measure adopted by the Continental Congress, professing American loyalty and seeking to end the hostilities. King George III rejected the petition and proclaimed the colonies in rebellion.

Hessians: German troops hired from their princes by George III to aid in putting down the colonial insurrection. This hardened the resolve of American colonists, who resented the use of paid foreign fighters (mercenaries).

Common Sense (1776): Thomas Paine’s pamphlet urging the colonies to declare independence and establish a republican government. The widely read pamphlet helped convince colonists to support the Revolution.

Richard Henry Lee – On June 7, 1776, proposed that “these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states.”

Declaration of Independence (July 4, 1776): Formal pronouncement of independence drafted by Thomas Jefferson and approved by Congress. The declaration allowed Americans to appeal for foreign aid and served as an inspiration for later revolutionary movements worldwide.

Loyalists: American colonists who opposed the revolution and maintained their loyalty to the king; sometimes referred to as “Tories.”

Patriots: colonists who supported the American Revolution; they were also known as “Whigs.”

Battle of Long Island (August 1776): Battle for control of New York. British troops overwhelmed the colonial militias and retained control of the city for most of the war.

Battle of Trenton (December 1776): George Washington surprised and captured a garrison of sleeping German Hessians, raising the morale of his discouraged army and setting the stage for his victory at Princeton a week later.

John “Gentleman Johnny” Burgoyne – led British invasion from Canada to capture Albany; was forced to surrender at Saratoga.

Battle of Saratoga (October 1777): Decisive colonial victory in upstate New York, which helped secure French support for the Revolutionary cause.

Model Treaty (1776): sample treaty drafted by the Continental Congress as a guide for American diplomats. Reflected the Americans’ desire to foster commercial partnerships rather than political or military entanglements.

Benjamin Franklin – diplomat that negotiated a treaty of alliance with France in Paris

Comte de Rochambeau – commander of the 6,000 French troops that arrived in Newport, RI, in the summer of 1780

Benedict Arnold – American general who turned traitor by plotting to turn over West Point to the British

lord Charles Cornwallis – British general who surrendered his army at Yorktown

Nathaniel Green – wore down British army in the Carolinas with delaying tactics

Joseph Brant – Mohawk chief who led raids on backcountry PA and NY. Brant helped the British in hopes that a victorious Britain would stop American expansion into the West.

Treaty of Fort Stanwix (1784): Treaty signed by the United States and the pro-British Iroquois granting the Ohio country to the Americans.

George Rogers Clark – led frontiersmen that seized the frontier forts of Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and Vincennes

privateers: Privately owned armed ships authorized by Congress to prey on enemy shipping during the Revolutionary War. Privateers, more numerous than the tiny American Navy, inflicted heavy damages on British shipping.

Admiral de Grasse – French admiral that prevented the British fleet from resupplying and reinforcing general Cornwallis at Yorktown

Battle of Yorktown (October 1781): George Washington, with the aid of the French Army, besieged Cornwallis at Yorktown, while the French naval fleet prevented British reinforcements from coming ashore. Cornwallis surrendered, dealing a heavy blow to the British war effort and paving the way for an eventual peace.

Treaty of Paris (1783): Peace treaty signed by Britain and the United States ending the Revolutionary War. The British formally recognized American independence and ceded territory east of the Mississippi River while the Americans, in turn, promised to restore Loyalists property and repay debts to British creditors.