AP US HISTORY: Summer Reading Assignment

American Creation: Triumphs and Tragedies at the Founding of the Republic

In his prologue, Joseph Ellis says, “In effect, history handed the American revolutionaries a blueprint for a new kind of political architecture that did not need to be discovered or invented, only applied.” Ellis then quotes George Washington, “‘At this auspicious period the United States came into existence as a Nation, and if their Citizens should not be completely free and happy, the fault will be intirely their own.’”

*“…we would be well advised to pause, get our historical bearings, and pose what is, at least on the face of it, a factual question: What, specifically, did the founding generation achieve? Why are they accorded such iconic status? What, in short, is all the fuss about?”*



Ellis outlines five core achievements as he explores and analyzes the founding of our nation. The five achievements he outlines are:

1. The revolutionaries defeated the most powerful army and navy of the modern era.
2. They created the first successful republic, a feat thought impossible for such a large geographic area.
3. They created a secular state, breaking from a long-held belief that religion was the common thread holding people together in society.
4. They created a system of government with overlapping sources of authority, in which the authority of the federal and state governments blurred while “the people” retained ultimate control.
5. They constructed a system that incorporated political parties as a source of ongoing debate and dialogue.

**THE TASK:** Ellis believed the ideas used to create our government were not original, they only needed to be applied, and Washington believed the people of the United States would determine their own freedom and happiness. Explain, using evidence from the text, why, according to Ellis, each of the core achievements of the Founders was important to the creation of the new nation. With each achievement, also discuss how each of the core achievements function in our current society.

**THE REQUIREMENTS:**

1. 5 pages (no more, no less)
2. typed, double spaced
3. 12 pt., New Times Roman font
4. **DUE first day of class**

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