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**APUSH History – Summer Assignment**

**8/29/17**

**American Lion**

*Author:* John Meachem

*Summary:* American Lion examines the inner thoughts and ideology of Andrew Jackson’s two terms as President of the United States. The author, John Meachem, demonstrates how Jackson epitomized the political movement of the common man in the United States, and refuted the aristocracy and elitism of the founders in building our nation. Jackson was elected, as a result of changes to state election laws, which nullified the property qualification for voting enfranchising all free white males. Throughout Jackson’s eight years as leader of an adolescent nation he fought usurping forces by being the first to campaigning against the corrupt bargain of 1824 election, establishing the spoil system to make government more accessible to common Americans, and destroying the elitist hydra of the Second Bank of the United States. But even though Andrew Jackson preached the gospel of smaller government and empowerment of the average American there were limits to that agenda. Jackson expanded the power of the presidency through expanded use of the veto, firing appointed officials confirmed by Senate, and utilizing force to quell nullification arguments and relocate Native American tribes.

*Analysis*

**PERSIA**

Political: Corrupt bargain, four year campaign, caucus system, enfranchisement of the common man, veto, kitchen cabinet, Martin Van Buren (The Little Magician), Whig Party (two party system), spoil system, nullification crisis, Force Bill, Indian Removal Act, Worchester v. Georgia, firing William Duane

Economic: Bank War, Nicholas Biddle, McCulloch v. Maryland, Tariff of Abomination, Compromise Tariff, King Cotton, the American system, industrialism, Specie Circular Law, Pet Banks

Religion: separation of church and state, reform movement, Presbyterianism

Social: abolitionism, Denmark Vessey and Nat Turner Slave Revolts, William Lloyd Garrison, the Nullies, John C. Calhoun’s “Slavery as a Positive Good”, the Common Man, Peggy Eaton Affair, Rachel Jackson Affair

Innovation/Technology: Mayesville and Cumberland Road, manufacturing system, cotton gin, and interchangeable parts

Area: Southern cash crop agriculture vs. Northern industrial economy, slaveocracy,

*Conclusion:*

Jon Meachem’s argues that the historic perspective of Andrew Jackson, as a tyrannical bully, is invalid. Jackson’s policy choices demonstrated political genius that balanced the needs of the union with those of the states. An example of this was the passage of the Force Bill and the Compromise Tariff to end the Nullification Crisis in South Carolina. Jackson did have some political astuteness in maintaining the union. He only prolonged the sectional crisis through his support of slavery with the gag rule in Congress to quiet the rising voice of abolition. Furthermore, President Jackson’s staunch belief in elitism led to the bank war causing the Panic of 1837. Also, Jackson’s philosophy over separation of the Native American population from the growing white population through the Indian Removal Act not only violated the Constitutional powers of the federal government, established in Georgia vs. Worchester. This also leads to Indian Wars, such as Seminole Wars and later Red Sand Massacre. Lastly, President Jackson’s embracement of the spoils system to open government to the common man led to years of political corruption. Looking at the latter half of the 19th century one can observe several examples of political corruption during the reign of the Forgettable Presidents. Some historical examples of this are the Credit Modilier and the Whiskey Ring scandals under President Grant, as well as the failure to protect President James Garfield from assassination by Charles Guiteau.

**Point of View:**

**Source Type:** secondary – examines the history of President Jackson’s tenure of office through the analysis of correspondents between Jackson and others.

John Meachem, the author of “American Lion”, argues that the historical perception of Andrew Jackson as a tyrant bully is actual a misnomer. President Jackson was able to balance conflicting interest of different groups in order to preserve the union in its adolescent years. An example of this is how Andrew Jackson dealt with the nullification crisis through using the government authority of the Force Bill, but allowing South Carolina to save face with the Compromise Tariff.