

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-81883-4 - Patriots, Settlers, and the Origins of American Social Policy

Laura Jensen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Patriots, Settlers, and the Origins of American Social Policy

Patriots, Settlers, and the Origins of American Social Policy offers a pathbreaking account of the pivotal role played by entitlement policies during the first hundred years of the United States' existence. Contrary to the story of developmental delay contained in the standard historiography, Laura Jensen reveals that national social policies not only existed in early America, but also were a major instrument by which the fledgling U.S. government built itself and the new nation. From 1776 on, Federal pensions and land entitlements figured prominently in the growth and empowerment of a unique American state, the consolidation and expansion of the country, and the political incorporation of a diverse citizenry. The book provides a rich account of how governing institutions, public expectations, ideas about law and legality, political necessity, and public policy gave shape to definitions of need, worth, and eligibility in late-eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America.

Laura Jensen is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Her Ph.D. dissertation, "The Entitlement Mentality: American Expectations of the State," won a 1993–4 Dissertation Award from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Prior to joining the faculty at the University of Massachusetts, Professor Jensen served for almost a decade in elected municipal office in Connecticut.

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-81883-4 - Patriots, Settlers, and the Origins of American Social Policy
Laura Jensen
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-81883-4 - Patriots, Settlers, and the Origins of American Social Policy

Laura Jensen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Patriots, Settlers, and the Origins of American Social Policy

LAURA JENSEN

University of Massachusetts, Amherst



Cambridge University Press
 978-0-521-81883-4 - Patriots, Settlers, and the Origins of American Social Policy
 Laura Jensen
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

32 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10013-2473, USA

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521818834

© Laura Jensen 2003

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2003

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Jensen, Laura Smietanka, 1955–

Patriots, settlers, and the origins of American social policy / Laura Smietanka Jensen.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-521-81883-4 – ISBN 0-521-52426-1 (pb.)

1. United States – Social policy – History – 18th century. 2. United States – Social policy – History – 19th century. 3. United States – Politics and government – 18th century. 4. United States – Politics and government – 19th century. I. Title.

HN13 .J46 2003

361.6'1 – dc21

2002034799

ISBN 978-0-521-81883-4 Hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-52426-1 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-81883-4 - Patriots, Settlers, and the Origins of American Social Policy

Laura Jensen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

To Rick

for everything

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-81883-4 - Patriots, Settlers, and the Origins of American Social Policy
Laura Jensen
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Contents

| | |
|--|----------------|
| <i>Acknowledgments</i> | <i>page</i> ix |
| 1 Entitlements in Law and History | 1 |
| Rethinking the American State and American Governance | 5 |
| Rethinking Entitlement(s) | 13 |
| The E-Word in Contemporary American Politics: What’s in a Name? | 16 |
| Entitlements as a Policy Device | 25 |
| Entitlements as “Rights at Work” | 31 |
| Entitlements and American Political Development | 40 |
| 2 Pensions for Revolutionary Patriots | 44 |
| Critical Precedents: Disability, Officers’, and Widows’ Pensions of the Revolutionary War Period | 48 |
| Veterans’ Benefits and Early Nation Building | 63 |
| 3 Revolutionary Policies | 80 |
| The Logic of Expansion | 88 |
| Revolutionary Pensions and Sectional Politics | 110 |
| 4 The “Public” Lands and Public Welfare | 123 |
| Public Lands and Early Nation Building, 1789–1811 | 136 |
| Soldiers, Settlers, and “Others”: The Public Domain and Land Entitlements, 1811–1830 | 150 |
| Public Land Policy and Sectionalism | 164 |
| 5 Expanding a Nation, Dissolving a Union | 171 |
| Causal Stories and Continental Ambitions | 177 |
| Movements Toward Universalism, 1847–1862 | 186 |
| Reconstruction Redux: The Civil War, Its (Union) Veterans, and Selective Entitlement | 205 |

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-81883-4 - Patriots, Settlers, and the Origins of American Social Policy
Laura Jensen
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

| | | |
|------|--|-----|
| viii | <i>Contents</i> | |
| 6 | Entitlements and the Constitution of the American Nation | 222 |
| | The Consequences of Policy Choice | 231 |
| | <i>Index</i> | 237 |

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-81883-4 - Patriots, Settlers, and the Origins of American Social Policy

Laura Jensen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgments

I have accumulated many personal and intellectual debts in the course of writing this book. While I can only hope to acknowledge some of the people and institutions that helped along the way, I offer my sincerest thanks for all of the assistance, encouragement, and patience that made this book possible.

I am especially indebted to the advisors who supervised the doctoral work that launched this project in the first place. Robert Gilmour, David Walker, and J. Garry Clifford provided the blend of enthusiasm and guidance that I needed to write a dissertation very unlike the one I originally planned. As I extended my research to produce this book, several colleagues at the University of Massachusetts kindly read portions or all of the manuscript and offered helpful comments and suggestions. John Brigham deserves special thanks for his engagement, encouragement, and appreciation of the constitutive. Alexandra Deschamps, Sheldon Goldman, John Hird, Kathryn McDermott, Joya Misra, Leonce Ndikumana, Mary Deane Sorcinelli, and George Sulzner also offered valuable advice and a supportive presence. Students in the Department of Political Science and the Center for Public Policy and Administration provided thoughtful audiences as I developed some of the ideas found in this volume. The members of my fall 2001 graduate seminar on American welfare policy read the manuscript with care, offered helpful suggestions about what made sense and what didn't, and gave me new energy. Christine Barber also furnished valuable research assistance on the final draft of the book.

Many scholars generously shared their expertise at critical stages of this project. Several offered important insights as I began to formulate my ideas: Janet Blasecki, Joel Handler, Susan Silbey, and Tom Tyler. I am also grateful to a number of scholars who shared ideas,

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-81883-4 - Patriots, Settlers, and the Origins of American Social Policy

Laura Jensen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

read chapter drafts, and provided key suggestions and criticisms: Melissa Buis, Christine Harrington, Ronald King, Eileen McDonagh, R. Shep Melnick, Sidney Milkis, Richard Morgan, James Morone, Karen Orren, Stephen Skowronek, Rogers Smith, and Robert C. Wood. My thanks also go to several anonymous reviewers who provided incisive comments and suggestions and to John Resch, who kindly let me read his fine book on Revolutionary veterans while it was still in page proof. Deborah Stone read the penultimate draft of the manuscript with interest and enthusiasm, offering vitally important advice on substance and style along with much-needed encouragement. She has shown me that shaping and polishing a book really is a collegial affair, and I will always be grateful. I am particularly indebted to Stuart McConnell, who over the years has extended his time and expertise with extraordinary generosity. His appreciation of what I wanted to accomplish in this project helped beyond measure, as did his intelligence, irreverence, and friendship.

For facilitating my research, I would like to thank the library staffs of Connecticut College, the University of Connecticut at Storrs, the University of Connecticut School of Law, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and Yale University. A number of librarians and archivists went out of their way to help me locate documents and solve research mysteries. I am especially grateful to Erhard Konerding at Olin Library, Wesleyan University; Rodney Ross and Nancy Melley at the Center for Legislative Archives, National Archives and Records Administration; Ellen McAllister Clark at the Society of the Cincinnati Library; William Thompson at the DuBois Library, University of Massachusetts; and Deborah Pelletier at Amherst College's Frost Library depository.

Thanks are also due for the considerable organizational and institutional support that made this book possible. A 1993–4 National Endowment for the Humanities Dissertation Award, #FD-20623, provided a crucial combination of financial support and uninterrupted time to work in the early days of the project. I am also grateful for grants from the University of Connecticut in the form of the Abraham Ribicoff and G. Lowell Field fellowships, and for research funds and a Lilly Teaching Fellowship from the University of Massachusetts. Thanks also go to the Law and Society Association for inviting me to participate in its first Summer Institute on Sociolegal Studies in 1992; the Wesleyan University Center for the Humanities for a 1995 Senior Research Fellowship; and

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-81883-4 - Patriots, Settlers, and the Origins of American Social Policy

Laura Jensen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Acknowledgments*

xi

the American Political Science Association for naming me the runner-up for the Schattschneider Award in 1997. For giving me the opportunity to present and test ideas as I prepared this book, I am particularly grateful to R. Shep Melnick, Morton Keller, Sidney Milkis, and Brandeis University; Betsy Traube and Wesleyan University; and Christopher Tomlins and the American Bar Foundation.

Lewis Bateman, editor extraordinaire, deserves my sincere thanks for his sustained interest in this project. I am very glad that I was able to work with him on this book. Thanks for editorial assistance are also due to Sarah Gentile, Helen Greenberg, and Louise Calabro. An early version of material now in Chapters 2 and 3 was published under the title “The Early American Origins of Entitlements” in *Studies in American Political Development* 10 (1996): 360–404. I am grateful to the editors for permission to reprint portions here.

Heartfelt thanks are due to the many friends who have provided encouragement, cheer, holiday celebrations, and home renovation adventures during my years of work on this book. Rhonda Domin, the late Jane Cobb Dow and Alva Morrison Dow, Anne and Will Emmet, and Miriam Kolodney and the late Harold Kolodney deserve special thanks for their many acts of kindness, good humor, and unflagging faith. Special thanks also go to Sandy Anglund for her insight, support, and appreciation of the ridiculous. Gail and Sal Catanzaro, Stenie and Steve Gullans, Sheila Suess Kennedy, Zyg Plater, Betty Smith, and Dara Wier also deserve thanks for the ways in which they helped me bring this book to fruition, as do the friends who have made Woods Hole such a wonderful place for the last ten summers: Charlotte, Bill, Max, and Fannie Bialek; Tera, Rob, Floor, Ninah, and Stan de Ruyter van Steveninck; and Karen, David, Alex, and Spencer Tank. Drs. Stuart Chipkin of Baystate Medical Center and John Heaney of Dartmouth Medical Center worked to ensure that I would finish this book, and I am enormously grateful for their intelligent care.

My greatest debt is to my family for sustaining me, and it is a particular pleasure finally to be able to thank them here. I am grateful for the special support of my parents, the late Leonard Lambert Smietanka, Marilyn Smietanka Ross, and William Ross; my grandmother, the late Estelle Anderson Carlson; and Patricia James Jensen, the late Roderick Emil Jensen, and the late Augusta James Wallace. Thanks also go to Ted and Jane Burnside Jensen and Ru and Suzanne Everson Jensen for good times

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-81883-4 - Patriots, Settlers, and the Origins of American Social Policy

Laura Jensen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xii

Acknowledgments

and affirming e-mail. To my husband, Roderick V. Jensen, and our children, Kate and Rory Jensen, go my love and thanks for always being there. You have filled my years of working on this book with more joy than I could have imagined possible, and reminded me daily about what is truly important in life. In more ways than I can express, I am so blessed.

L.S.J.
Pelham, Massachusetts
March 18, 2002