Patriots, Settlers, and the Origins of American Social Policy
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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 US government built itself and the new nation. From 1776 onwards, 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.

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