

Summer 2010

The Squatters and the Polish Exiles: Frontier and Whig Definitions of Republicanism in Jacksonian Illinois

Eric Willey

Illinois State University, emwille@ilstu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/fpml>



Part of the [United States History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

"The Squatters and the Polish Exiles: Frontier and Whig Definitions of Republicanism in Jacksonian Illinois," *Journal of Illinois History*, 13, no. 2 (Summer 2010): 129-50.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Milner Library at ISU ReD: Research and eData. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty and Staff Publications – Milner Library by an authorized administrator of ISU ReD: Research and eData. For more information, please contact ISURed@ilstu.edu.

The Squatters and the Polish Exiles

Frontier and Whig Definitions of Republicanism in Jacksonian Illinois

ERIC WILLEY

In 1834, 235 exiled Polish revolutionaries petitioned the United States Congress for a grant of land for the purpose of establishing a colony on the American frontier.¹ Congress, while sympathizing with the plight of the Poles and applauding their struggle against Russian tyranny in the Polish Revolution of 1830, instead granted the Poles what would more accurately be called a preemption right to purchase land near present-day Rockton and Rockford for the minimum price after ten years of occupancy.² During that time they would have no clear title to the land or ability to mortgage it to raise funds. While both Congress and the press referred to a “grant” or “donation” of land to the Poles, the restrictions placed upon taking ownership of the land made it much less. To make matters worse, the lands selected by Polish agent Louis Chlopicki were occupied by native squatters attempting to exercise their own preemption rights.³

For several years the two sides debated who was best suited to settle public lands, with Congress initially embracing the Poles as best suited to spread American republican values to the frontier, while native settlers argued that their use and improvement of the land gave them the strongest claim. Ultimately, Congress agreed with the native-born squatters and nullified the Polish land grant, ending any chance of the exiles forming a colony.

The historiography of the failed Polish land grant is limited and tends to focus on the Polish exiles rather than the American settlers. Polish historian Jerzy Jan Lerski authored the most comprehensive study of the Polish exiles’ attempt to create a colony; however, he focuses very tightly on the Poles, and while the actions of the settlers are mentioned to provide context, they are not discussed in any great detail.⁴

Eric Willey received an M.A. in history from Western Illinois University in May 2010, where he worked as an intern for the Illinois Regional Archives Depository. He is currently pursuing a second M.A. in library science at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, where he is a project assistant with the Wisconsin Historical Society’s McCormick-International Harvester Company Collection.

Florian Stasik treats the land controversy in a similar manner and also largely omits the efforts of the settlers to secure title to the land, while devoting more attention to the events in Europe that forced the Poles to come to America.⁵ Prior to Lerski and Stasik, Mrs. Isaac D. Rawlings studied the Polish exiles in Illinois over a longer period of time, but devoted little discussion to the efforts of settlers to block the Polish land grant.⁶ Other than those three studies, literature on the conflict largely consists of various county histories that reference the incident, often through the use of an uncredited letter that originally appeared in Rockford's *Winnebago Forum*.⁷ Charles A. Church's *History of Rockford and Winnebago County, Illinois* is an excellent example of that brief history from noncited sources, and while it focuses on the settlers, it still largely omits their actions and justifications for claiming the land.⁸ Charles V. Kraitsir, a Hungarian doctor who was exiled with the Poles, penned a history of Poland in 1837 in which the unresolved land grant was the final chapter.⁹ There, too, the arguments that the settlers made for native settlement of public lands were largely ignored.

While the historiography of the Polish colony is limited, historians' study of "republicanism" and "virtue" in American political discourse has been extensive.¹⁰ James T. Kloppenberg notes: "Many Americans came to identify freedom increasingly with freedom from interference and restraint."¹¹ Gordon S. Wood characterizes the transformation as a result of how "productive labor . . . came to be identified with republicanism."¹² In short, historians have detected tension between a definition of republicanism that was essentially civic virtue (in this case, especially through direct struggle with increasing executive power) and a definition of republican virtue symbolized by autonomous citizens pursuing economic opportunity. That tension can be located in debates over how to settle the early American frontier, but also in an instance from the Jacksonian era where republicanism was not a purely internal debate confined to Americans of different class, background, or geography. During the brief emergence of a Polish republic in 1830, Americans referenced foreign and domestic policy measures and events in Europe to consciously alter the definition of republicanism.

It was not hard for Americans to relate the struggles of the Poles against Russia to their own revolt against England. Poland lost its independence when it was partitioned by Russia, Austria, and Prussia in 1795. Despite the general willingness of Polish leaders to work with the Russian government prior to the revolution, Poles exiled after 1831 successfully portrayed the revolution as the natural consequence of Russian tyranny over Poland.¹³ The alleged intention of Tsar Nicholas I to force the Polish armies to crush revolutions in France and Belgium also served to create the image of Poles defending republicanism everywhere, and not merely fighting for Polish independence.¹⁴ The Marquis de Lafayette encouraged the Americans to aid the Poles, and he compared the Polish revolution to the American Revolution. After the 1830 revolution failed and Tsar Nicholas absorbed central and eastern Poland into Russia (ending what political identity Poland had retained after the partitioning), Lafayette continued to aid the approximately ten thousand Poles who

settled in France through the 1830s and 1840s.¹⁵ Americans applauded the efforts of Lafayette and the Poles, although when it came to actually assisting them “the great majority preferred to stay at home and intervene by damning the Czar and spitting spiteful curses at the French for refusing to send their army eastward in behalf of freedom.”¹⁶

American newspapers printed accusations of Russian barbarity and complained of a general European apathy toward the cause of republicanism. Translated extracts from a letter sent by “a gallant Polish officer” to a friend in Boston were published in 1833. The letter writer noted that even in France, “although the present ministry is condemned and hated by the vast majority of the people, it still exists, and still goes on in its course, unopposed by aught but silent indignation.”¹⁷ Europeans were more interested in their own “internal affairs,” and the European policy in general “seems to be that of arresting the march of [the] mind, and of retarding the progress of civilization and humanity.”¹⁸ The writer thanked the American people for their sympathy toward the Polish cause while bemoaning the lack of support for republicanism in Europe.¹⁹

As one of the three partitioners of Poland, the Austrian government in particular had reason to be eager to rid Europe of the Polish revolutionaries. Austria, Russia, and Prussia pledged mutual military assistance in the event of an uprising in Poland and further agreed to refuse asylum to Polish revolutionaries. Austrian statesman Prince Metternich, however, had promised French Ambassador Maison that Austria would not force Polish officers to return to Russian Poland.²⁰ While Metternich may have been unwilling to return the Polish exiles to Russia by force, he was also unwilling to have them agitating for Polish independence in Austria, prompting the arrest and imprisonment of several hundred of them.²¹ The Poles would have preferred to emigrate to France rather than the United States, but the French government had barred Polish revolutionaries after a few hundred of them left France with the intention of entering southern Germany and causing disturbances.²²

Unable to return the Poles to Russia against their will, unable and unwilling to grant them asylum in Austria, and unable to send them to France, Austria resorted to the United States.²³ There was minimal contact with American authorities regarding the forced deportation of the Poles, with the *London Times* reporting that an unidentified New York official had stated that the Poles would be able to find work if they were industrious, or would be welcome in the frontier states if they were skilled in arms. Secretary of State Louis McLane declared there was no federal law prohibiting the Poles from seeking asylum in the United States, and so with only minimal, noncommittal discussion with the American consul in Austria and officials in New York, and no meaningful direct discussion with the federal government in Washington, the Austrian government placed the 235 Polish exiles and a number of convicts on two frigates in Trieste, Italy, on November 22, 1833, and sent them

to New York.²⁴ Illinois newspapers began to follow the Polish exiles as early as December 24, 1833, when the *Chicago Democrat* noted that approximately three hundred Poles were being sent to the United States by the Austrian government.²⁵

The Poles enjoyed some initial support from the Americans, but their popularity was by no means overwhelming. Lerksi reports only a brief notation in the New York daily newspapers stating that some Polish passengers had arrived on Austrian frigates the day before, noting that while many New Yorkers came to the pier to see the exiles and took some of the Poles home with them, some were there “out of mere curiosity, others out of pity, and there were even some who had come with the expectation of taking financial advantage of easy victims.”²⁶ Stasik notes that the common populace of New York “did not display much interest in the newly arrived Poles.”²⁷ The Poles did receive some measure of charity from institutions however, particularly Catholic churches.²⁸ In all, the New York aid committee raised \$3,500 for the Poles, much from religious institutions and local government. The committee’s administrator, former U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin, calculated that the funds would not last long once travel expenses, clothing, and other necessities had been purchased.²⁹ The lack of funds would also cause tensions with Gallatin, as individual Poles began to suspect him of favoritism and demanded more control over the distribution of funds. Gallatin sought to retain his authority as chairman, gradually becoming alienated from the exiles, depriving them of one of their most influential advocates.³⁰ Raising additional funds was difficult, as the general populace of New York displayed little enthusiasm for the Polish cause.

The Poles quickly attempted to capitalize on what goodwill they had by dispatching a group to request a grant of land from Congress. The committee members petitioned Congress, noting that they were not willing immigrants, but that “As long as we had a country that we could call our own, we resolutely fought for her independence.”³¹ The committee stated its intention to form a “second Poland” in the United States. The grant of land would permit them to “live a life of active industry, and to become useful to our country of adoption.”³² The Poles presented a modest goal, but notes attached to the petition before it was sent to the Committee on Public Lands indicated far more ambitious plans.

Those notes were likely created by New York Congressman Churchill C. Cambreleng when he introduced the petition to the U.S. House of Representatives.³³ Cambreleng was a Jacksonian Democrat who later supported President Martin Van Buren (Van Buren appointed Cambreleng as Minister to Russia after Cambreleng lost his congressional seat in 1838).³⁴ The notes that Cambreleng attached to the petition represented an example of the romantic views of Eastern Jacksonians regarding the struggle between liberty and tyranny, and the ideal society of a citizenry of independent yeomen.³⁵ By 1830 the question of how to dispose of the public lands had become sectional. Jacksonian Democrats (particularly from the West) sought to keep land prices low as an incentive to settlement, while Eastern Whigs such as Henry Clay and John Quincy Adams wished to keep prices high to slow settlement (and not incidentally, to keep a large

labor pool in the East to hold down wages).³⁶ The notes reflect the Eastern Jacksonian belief that the Poles would be rewarded for their struggle against Russian despotism in the most appropriate manner possible: with a grant of land ensuring their freedom and independence.

Cambreleg's notes stated that the Poles wished to "save the sacred fire of patriotism, of liberty, and of human dignity," and they "will show to Europe that their presence is only to be feared there, where there is tyranny and degradation of mankind."³⁷ The vigorous rhetoric continued: "[T]heir fate seems to deserve greater pity than of those who are in this free and happy country. We presume the state of things in Europe will sooner or later contrive many of them to come and join us here, flying the perfidious and sanguinary policy of the royal conspirators, the artifices and machinations of their spies, *agents provocateurs* . . . and other spiders of the Augean-stable governments."³⁸

The narrative predicted more revolutions in Europe: "We think that in consequence of such and similar commotions, there will be many weary and tired of their precarious and provisory state of existence, and that they will direct their eyes to these quiet and hospitable shores, where liberty, equality, and humanity are dwelling in spite of their enemies."³⁹ Far from being a simple colony of exiles, some members of Congress saw the Polish colony as a means to draw other republican-minded individuals away from repressive European governments and to America, where they would reinforce domestic opposition to tyranny.

After some debate Congress passed a bill granting the Poles land in Illinois or Michigan Territory, with prominent statesmen such as Henry Clay, John Calhoun, and Daniel Webster voting in its favor.⁴⁰ The initial bill, allowing for the selection of thirty-six sections of land in three adjoining townships, was passed on June 30, 1834, and signed by President Andrew Jackson.⁴¹ Both Illinois senators voted against the measure. Elias Kane objected to the bill for favoring the Poles over native citizens, declaring that in its present form the bill would allow the Poles to claim even the Galena lead mines.⁴² The reasons John Robinson voted against the bill are not known, but Kane's concern that the Poles would select highly desirable lands, which would lead to conflicts with native settlers, foreshadowed the controversy to come. Without the support of Kane and Robinson, the Poles would find themselves without a voice from Illinois in the Senate to support their claims in the coming controversy, while the settlers would draw on their senators for support and apply political pressure on their elected representatives to argue against the claim.

The law stipulated that the Poles reside on and cultivate the land for ten years, after which they could pay the minimum auction price for land at the time and acquire a title.⁴³ Gallatin was ambivalent about the proposed colony, largely because of the tremendous cost of moving 235 individuals to the frontier and setting up farms for them, even on land donated by the government.⁴⁴ The Polish exiles chose Louis Chlopicki and John Prehal as land agents, but due to internal politics among the Poles and inexplicable delays, Chlopicki arrived alone in Illinois in November

of 1834 to select the land.⁴⁵ Prehal, instead of accompanying Chlopicki to Illinois, toured the states soliciting funds for the settlement. But instead of turning those funds over to the committee, he kept them, made his way to New Orleans, and from there embarked for Europe on June 16, 1835.⁴⁶ Further delaying matters, the lands that Chlopicki eventually selected would not be surveyed until September 1835.⁴⁷ Despite that, some seventy exiles did set out for the lands selected by Chlopicki.⁴⁸ Their poverty meant that they journeyed mostly on foot, and Stasik notes that many stopped before arriving due to “[p]hysical exhaustion, disease, the rigor of the trip, and lack of money.”⁴⁹ The exiles then wrote letters to those who had not yet set out for the colony, warning them to attempt the trip to Illinois only at their own peril.⁵⁰

Initially, Illinoisans were enthusiastic about the Poles settling in the state. At a meeting chaired by Illinois Supreme Court Justice Theophilus W. Smith in Vandalia on May 23, 1834,⁵¹ supporters of the Poles stressed their “patriotic daring and immense sacrifice” and passed a resolution to create a committee in every county of Illinois to collect money on behalf of the Poles.⁵² G. W. Carruthers, a minor Illinois politician who would later serve as secretary to the Board of Public Works, spoke against the land grant and county aid committees, urging the assembly not to “forget our own equally meritorious and patriotic citizens” and that the “scheme of operations embraced in the resolution, is too large—too broad, and calculated to drain wealth from a thousand channels to enrich foreign friends.”⁵³ Carruthers was out-voted, and the meeting generated a resolution exhorting the Poles to “share with the hardy sons of the valley of the great Mississippi our plenty and our Independence.”⁵⁴ Former and current Illinois statesmen signed the petition.⁵⁵ A similar letter extolling the virtue of the Poles was published in the *Chicago Democrat* on September 10, 1834, and a third letter urging “that collections be taken in their behalf” appeared in the *Illinois Advocate and State Register* on November 19, 1834.⁵⁶ In the same issue, the *Illinois Advocate and State Register* also published a speech by Chlopicki in which he stressed that the Poles would require aid to survive the coming winter.⁵⁷ All of those letters were published before Chlopicki made his selection of occupied lands and squatters began to argue that immigrants were unsuited to settle the frontier.

The Know Nothing Party would not formally rise until after the Polish controversy was over, but anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic sentiments were already stirring, chiefly among the Whigs and in various small splinter parties.⁵⁸ Nativist Lyman Beecher in his most famous work, *A Plea for the West*, argued against settling foreigners on the frontier. Published in 1835, the book was an expansion of a series of speeches Beecher gave in the East the previous summer that included such warnings as: “Half a million of unprincipled, reckless voters in the hands of demagogues, may, in our balanced elections, overrule all the property, and wisdom, and moral principles of the nation.”⁵⁹ While Beecher did not specifically address the Polish colony in his writings, his anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic views were well

represented in the press and literature of the time.⁶⁰ Beecher believed it was critical to the success of the nation to extend New England influence into the West as quickly as possible to prevent it being corrupted.⁶¹

The sentiments of the American Party, a nativist Whig splinter group more formally known as the Native American Democratic Association, were published in the *Chicago American*. Primarily formed around anti-Irish and anti-Catholic sentiment, the party included prominent citizens such as Samuel F. B. Morse and newspaper publishers Mordecai M. Noah and James W. Webb as leaders. Lacking the numbers of the Whigs and Democrats, the nativist groups still kept anti-immigrant sentiments in the public eye. While not directly addressing the Poles or their land claim, the newspaper noted that “Unless our naturalization laws are altered and a longer residence among us is required as a qualification of citizenship, the government of this country will surely pass into the hands of foreigners.”⁶² The newspaper then urged that “every honest, well meaning adopted citizen, should himself ask for an alteration in our naturalization laws. He should say to Congress . . . I did not come here to govern you, to control the wishes and suffrages of native born citizens.”⁶³ Later, the newspaper reiterated: “It is not a new opinion with us, as our readers well know—nor one hastily adopted, that no man of foreign birth should be admitted to the political rights of an American citizen.”⁶⁴

Congress also examined the issue of immigration, particularly in regards to foreign paupers and politics. On May 2, 1836, Anti-Jacksonian Massachusetts Senator John Davis stated that “humanity makes no appeal to us to receive and cherish those who have no respect for virtue, morality, or themselves; those who are forced among us because they are too corrupt, debauched, and indolent to be tolerated in a country not over scrupulous in its morals.”⁶⁵ The House heard and referred to committee a petition from the Native American Association, “complaining that a large portion of the power of this Government is in the hands of adventurers from every clime, before they have had time to acquire a knowledge of our language, and before they have learned the first principles of a republican Government.”⁶⁶ While Congress did not pass laws restricting immigration during that time, they were clearly aware of an anti-immigrant sentiment among their constituents.

Despite initial enthusiasm among Illinois residents, negative attitudes toward the Polish exiles soon emerged. When the Austrian government placed the Polish exiles on the frigates to America they also had taken the opportunity to divest their jails of twenty common criminals.⁶⁷ The *Sangamo Journal* and *Illinois Advocate and State Register* both published a letter that stated: “To those who have passed through Poland, it is well known, that few countries are more fertile in what the French call *mauvais sujets*”—bad or wicked persons.⁶⁸ The newspapers went on to suggest that settlers practice “utmost caution in giving credit to the stories related by persons styling themselves Polish officers, noblemen and patriots.”⁶⁹ Although the newspapers also declared that “the countrymen of Pulaski, will receive a hearty welcome at the hands of all our citizens,” they blamed the presence of criminals

among the exiles on the national character of the Poles themselves, not the Austrian government.⁷⁰ The warning to deal with any Poles claiming to be political exiles with “utmost caution” would be taken to heart, and suspicion would grow over time.⁷¹

While there were unsettled areas on the northern Illinois frontier in November 1834 (when Chlopicki informed the land office of his selections), the area was rapidly filling with land-hungry settlers. Even when Chlopicki visited the area to make his selections of land for the Polish exiles, there were already approximately thirty families living in the Rockford and Rockton vicinity.⁷² Northern Illinois had a sudden increase in settlers with the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, and President Jackson’s veto of the charter and defunding of the Second Bank of the United States made easy credit available from the state banks that sprang up.⁷³ The Black Hawk War briefly deterred settlers, but recovery was quick, and after 1832 settlers began to expand outward from the “river valleys to the inland counties.”⁷⁴ The settlement of northern Illinois was virtually completed by 1837, and as Chlopicki chose lands along a river between Galena and rapidly expanding Chicago, it is likely they were also among the earliest to have been chosen by squatters.⁷⁵

Word that Chlopicki’s selections encompassed land already settled, albeit illegally, spread quickly and Americans began to feel that the Poles were being given preferential treatment. Chlopicki is said to have told Rockford founder Germanicus Kent that “the settlers should not be disturbed.”⁷⁶ However, as early as January 3, 1835, the *Western Gazette and Galena Advertiser* advised readers that “the Poles to whom a grant of two townships of land was made by Congress, have selected it along Rock River from the mouth of the Picatolika [Pecatonica] down eighteen miles, two miles in width upon each side.”⁷⁷ The following week the newspaper stated: “We are favorable to their settlement within our border, but in the selection of the lands which they have received by donation it would seem hardly just, that the act in their favor should receive a liberality of construction, which would be denied to our own citizens. . . . But however and wherever they may determine to establish their colony, the possessory privileges of our own citizens should in no case be disturbed.”⁷⁸ That is ironic, as the residency restrictions placed upon the Poles’ land were considerably more strict than those applied to native squatters by past preemption laws.⁷⁹ The argument that the Poles had no more right to unsettled land than natives would eventually develop into the argument that the settlers were better suited to settle the land than the Polish exiles.

Others argued that by virtue of their suffering in the struggle against Russian tyranny, the Poles had a better claim to the land than native-born Americans. Theodore Dwight’s *Things As They Are* notes that the Poles’ commitment to combating despotism and expresses reservations about American dedication to preventing increasing executive power.⁸⁰ Dwight went so far as to speculate that God might have sent the exiles to the United States to remind the Americans of their past:

It seemed to me, while conversing with some of these lonely exiles, as if Providence had sent them among us at this time not without a kind design. We have been so remote from the sight of oppression and violence, so long accustomed to regard tyranny and lawless rule as mere creatures of the imagination, that when sentiments are declared, and measures taken tending strongly that way, instead of taking the alarm, too many of us look on with indifference, as if there were a wall of impenetrable brass erected to secure our liberty. These melancholy and silent strangers seem to whisper to us, to beware of ourselves, our freedom, and our country.⁸¹

Dwight asserted that Americans had come to take their liberty for granted, and that American sympathy would be repaid by the presence of the Poles if they serve to rouse the Americans to a greater state of watchfulness in guarding their freedoms.

The exiled Polish secretary of state cautioned against involvement in politics. A letter from Julian Niemciwicz, published in the *Western Gazette and Galena Advertiser* admonished the exiles to “Respect the laws and constitution of the land; be obedient to them. Remember that you are strangers there: that it is not for you to indulge in political dreams—to reform governments—to erect new societies and new systems, although this may sound strange to you.”⁸² The letter further reminded the Poles that while they were free to enact their own municipal laws, they must be permissible under the U.S. Constitution.⁸³ The Baltimore-based *Niles’ Weekly Register* published an abridged version of the letter (and identified it as such), but omitted those cautionary passages. The *Weekly Register* also published a letter by Polish Prince Adam Czartoryski reminding his immigrant brethren that Poles had fought with Americans in the Revolution: “America received you undoubtedly as countrymen of Casimir Pulaski, and of Thadeus Kosciuszko. Pulaski, the first hero of our still enduring struggle, fell fighting for the independence of America.”⁸⁴

The *Niles’ Weekly Register* then criticized the two letters in a brief editorial, observing that the letters advised the Poles to live together and continue to speak Polish, to the extent of teaching the language to their American brides. The editorial questioned the commitment of the Poles to becoming Americans, stating that “it is their *duty* to study and make themselves acquainted with the language and laws of that to which they have been driven, affording them liberty and safety, with peace. There should be only one ‘NATIONALITY’ in the United States—with which *politics* has nothing to do, whether of foreign or domestic origin.”⁸⁵ The editorial did not state specifically what the criteria was for becoming American (beyond an acquaintance with the American language and laws) after ruling out politics, but it is not difficult to infer. The admonishment that politics had nothing to do with becoming American is in direct response to advice that the Poles live together and continue to speak Polish, isolating themselves from society. In order to become Americans, the editor strongly implied that the Poles must reject that advice and integrate themselves into American society, not remain apart from it. Even while

associating the Poles with the heroes of the American Revolution, the *Niles' Weekly Register* apparently adopted the view that an immigrant's assimilation into society was more important than his politics.

But the Poles did not have enough money to settle lands selected for them. They tried in April 1836 to convince Congress to allow them to sell a portion of the grant to finance its settlement.⁸⁶ Gallatin did not support their request, and Congress refused to alter the wording of the original 1834 land grant.⁸⁷ Combined with the reversal of earlier local support that was quickly turning to hostility, it became "virtually impossible for the Poles to take possession of the land Chlopicki chose along the Rock River."⁸⁸ The Senate also lent weight to preemption claims by settlers by attempting to amend the original land bill to exclude claims of "lands which were already settled and under cultivation, or lands which have not been surveyed."⁸⁹ While that addition did not pass the House, the proposed Senate amendment did give some legitimacy to the settlers' claims that they should be granted rights of preemption.⁹⁰ The Poles' attempts to find employment scattered them widely, making coordination between the exiles difficult and slow. After 1835 Stasik places approximately 150 of them in Boston and surrounding towns, 60 to 70 in New York City, 20 in New Orleans, 10 in West Troy, N.Y., and smaller numbers in Philadelphia, Wilmington, Del., and Albany, N.Y. A few left the United States, surfacing in Bogota, Columbia, and Mexico. In the face of those overwhelming difficulties, the Poles seem to have gradually lost heart in the proposed colony.⁹¹

Even if the Poles persuaded Congress to let them sell a portion of the grant, the General Land Office had not yet surveyed Chlopicki's selections and so informed the Treasury Department on March 10, 1835.⁹² The survey would not be completed until late in 1835. Lerski claimed that the survey was deliberately delayed "for sinister reasons" by the regional officers of the Saint Louis Land Office.⁹³ Lerski did not elaborate, but he was certainly correct that one of the Illinois land officers, D. A. Spaulding, wrote an extensive and abusive letter regarding the situation to Illinois Congressman William L. May on March 22, 1836. The letter is included in the *American State Papers*, and is recorded as having been "communicated to the House of Representatives, April 15, 1836."⁹⁴ Spaulding may well have had ulterior motives in writing the letter, as he was elected Winnebago County surveyor in August 1836.⁹⁵ Stipulating that Chlopicki had initially chosen unsettled lands and promised residents he would not select land they had improved, Spaulding then asserted that Chlopicki had changed his selections to the most valuable lands in order to sell them to speculators in the hope that Congress would ignore the residency requirement and approve the sale.⁹⁶ However innocent their intentions, the Poles' attempt to persuade Congress to allow sale of part of the land likely made the charge more credible and damaged their reputation with Congress.

Spaulding's letter then denegated the Polish settlers' character at some length, stating that they "have proved to be (with few exceptions) a miserable, degraded set of vagabonds, unworthy the esteem and regard of all respectable people," and that

“many of them are *dissipated, indolent, and vicious*, having no qualifications or inclinations to be respectable citizens.”⁹⁷ Chlopicki himself was said to run one of “the *meanest* groceries in St. Louis,” and Spaulding stated that he had received assurances that Chlopicki would soon be arrested for running a “disorderly house,” or brothel.⁹⁸ Better to give the land to Americans, declared Spaulding:

This reluctance on the part of the representatives of a free and independent people to grant to actual settlers a right of pre-emption, contrasted with the law granting the land to the Poles, furnishes a striking commentary on the frailty of human nature, which, in the one case, denies to the enterprising and industrious American citizens, who suffer the privations and undergo the hardships of a frontier settlement, what it would seem they almost have a right to demand, as a matter of right, and in the other case a liberality toward a set of vagabond foreigners which has never been exercised toward our own citizens.⁹⁹

The American settlers decided to verify the legality of the Polish land claims for themselves. Rockford founder Germanicus Kent went to the Land Office in Washington D.C., to inquire into the legality of the American squatters’ claims. Kent was told that “every settler in the county was a trespasser, and that he had no legal right to a foot of the land which he had so unceremoniously taken.”¹⁰⁰ Unwilling to accept that, Kent lobbied Congress on behalf of the squatters. On May 31, 1836, New York Representative Francis Granger related that Kent had told him “he had gone on to the public lands, without authority of law, but as an American citizen, and [was] as much entitled to the consideration of Congress as any Polish exile, however unfortunate his position.”¹⁰¹ Virginia Representative James Wood Bouldin followed Granger’s remarks, questioning the reasoning behind granting land to the Poles. “Were they meritorious: Our own citizens are equally so. Were they poor: Our own citizens, many of them, were as poor as any body.”¹⁰² Bouldin elaborates in stronger language, stating: “We had jewed, screwed, he was sorry to say, almost shuffled with, our old revolutionary soldiers, in relation to their claims, and had given these foreigners their thirty-six sections of land . . . including the improvements of many who had spent their lives, and risked the lives of their families, to obtain from the Indians the very land now given to the Poles.”¹⁰³

The nativist *Chicago American* added to anti-Polish sentiment on September 17, 1836, stating that “we are not willing to see native Americans driven from their homes, in order that they may be given to a pack of refugee foreigners, come from what country they may.”¹⁰⁴ Despite a lingering romantic vision of their own revolution, Americans were beginning to embrace the view that the West was best settled by private individuals pursuing economic gain, not revolutionaries.

Enthusiasm for the exiles seemed to be waning in the executive branch as well. Levi Woodbury of the U.S. Treasury Office objected to the validity of the Polish claim. The Land Office received the survey plats and Chlopicki’s selections on May

2, 1836, but the Treasury Department was in charge of the sale and disposal of public lands. Woodbury raised three objections to granting the land to the Poles: That only Chlopicki and not both he and Prehal signed the selections, that thirty-eight sections were listed (some as fractions) and not thirty-six, and that it was unclear if the selections interfered with “rights of individuals under the pre-emption laws.”¹⁰⁵ Preemption laws had been passed in 1830, 1832, and 1834, allowing settlers who had been in possession of and cultivated public-domain land the previous year to purchase a certain number of acres at the minimum price; however, they offered no protection for settlers who had begun cultivating their lands after 1833 and were therefore of no protection to the squatters on the lands claimed by Chlopicki, who had made their improvements after that date.¹⁰⁶ As no current preemption law protected the settlers, Woodbury had to appeal to the spirit of past preemption laws in denying the validity of the Polish claim.

General Land Office Commissioner Ethan A. Brown responded that a vote by the committee representing the Poles should be sufficient to remove any requirement of Prehal’s signature, that Chlopicki’s selections comprised an amount slightly short of the total acreage Congress allowed, that it was impossible to subdivide the grant among 235 individuals in any manner consistent with current land law, and that it was not his job to determine if the settlers were protected by preemption laws.¹⁰⁷ A tedious bureaucratic debate followed between the Treasury Department and General Land Office, complicated by a claim of property by Catharine and Mary Myott, who had been granted a floating land claim in a treaty signed with the Winnebago Indians in 1829.¹⁰⁸

Meanwhile, squatters sent petitions to Congress. The September 20, 1837, petition stressed that the lands selected by Chlopicki had already been settled, and began a theme that would be developed extensively in later petitions that the lands selected “were already settled upon by American citizens, and upon which large improvements had been made.” The petitioners also suggested that land speculators might try to alter the law to allow Poles to immediately sell their land rather than occupying it.¹⁰⁹ More extensive petitions followed soon after. On October 18, 1837, the settlers alerted Congress that Chlopicki, “though degraded in person by habits of intoxication, was treated with the utmost hospitality, and pledged his word, to different individuals, that he would not include their improvements in his selection.”¹¹⁰ The settlers went on to inform Congress that none of the exiles had attempted to settle on their land claim because: “The truth is, they never did intend to settle and cultivate in person. They are not the practical, industrious, temperate, self denying people demanded in settling a new country.”¹¹¹ The settlers then reiterated rumors that the only reason the Poles still desired the land was that they were engaged in selling it to land speculators. Intentionally or not, that was effective political maneuvering by the settlers, whose association of the Poles with “speculators” discredited the Poles.¹¹²

While attacking the Poles, the settlers also described themselves not just as United States citizens or petitioners, but as “actual settlers for cultivation and improvement in township forty-four north, of range one east.”¹¹³ The settlers’ improvement of the land was a recurrent theme. The settlers stipulated that during their residence they “made improvements thereon to an extent far greater than have been made in a vast majority of townships which have been sold and settled for twenty years and upwards.” The settlers emphasized the large number of construction and civic-works projects undertaken, assigned a dollar value to each, listed how much grain had been raised, and alluded to other produce that had been grown in the township.¹¹⁴ The settlers had earlier made claims to rights regarding the equity they had invested in the land, and they now continued that argument. The squatters also made sure their views were represented at the state government level, and electing Germanicus Kent to the Illinois state legislature for the 1838–1840 term.¹¹⁵

The debate dragged on, with the commissioners for the General Land Office offering suggestions to solve the survey Myott claim problems, until the Treasury Department sent the entire matter back to Congress on January 24, 1838.¹¹⁶ In Congress, Illinois Senator Richard Young recommended that the Polish claim be voided by their failure to occupy the lands for the requisite ten years, and the matter was referred to committee.¹¹⁷ Unfortunately for the Poles, the tide of opinion in Congress had turned against them.

Meanwhile, the Polish committee had lost its patience with Chlopicki, and replaced him with a new agent, John Rychlicki, on April 15, 1837. Rychlicki completed the new selections for the land taken by the Myotts in June 1837, but the Saint Louis Land Office delayed sending the letter until February 1838.¹¹⁸ Except for the replacement of Chlopicki, the Polish exiles seem to have done little to push their claim, in contrast with the American settlers who “bombarded Congress with all sorts of protests and resolutions.”¹¹⁹ While the settlers continued to send petitions, the Polish exiles remained silent until 1840, when they sent a final, rather passively worded petition to Congress to again stress that they are “exiles for the cause of liberty” and that they wished to be “useful members of the country of their adoption,” citing the sole reason for the delay in occupying the lands as the inability to subdivide the lots (omitting Chlopicki’s selection of occupied lands).¹²⁰

In January 1841, with the matter of preemption laws before Congress, Tennessee Senator Alexander O. Anderson formally argued that the frontier settlers were better suited than the Poles to maintain republicanism on the frontier. Anderson noted: “Sir, the poor of every land are the same. They are the lovers of liberty wherever you find them, because they have been made to taste the bitter cup of degradation. You have nothing to fear from such men! Such were the sires of that population which filled our victorious armies in the Revolutionary struggle.”¹²¹ Anderson characterized the men as the “hardy, industrious, and enterprising portion of their fellow citizens, who go from the respective States, to seek a solitary home in the great wilderness of the West.”¹²² Republican virtue no longer resided in the Polish revolutionaries who fought against despotism, but in the poor who voluntarily

moved to settle the frontier and develop the land. As Michael Kammen has written, with the revolutionary generation dying, Americans tried in the 1830s to find new means to establish “political order, social stability, and national identity.”¹²³ For the Poles, that meant the end of their colony.

On April 14, 1842, Congress declared that Chlopicki had not made his selections in accordance with the conditions of the land grant, and preemption rights were extended to the settlers.¹²⁴ The squatters had effectively delayed Congress until enthusiasm for the Poles waned, taking advantage of sympathies at local survey offices and the controversy caused by Chlopicki’s own unfortunate selection of occupied lands.

The Polish colony was never established, and the land that is now Rockford and Rockton was purchased by the squatters or other settlers.¹²⁵ The Poles assimilated, making it difficult to say where they finally settled.¹²⁶ Concerned with the day-to-day necessity of survival, the Poles were not active in United States or European politics.¹²⁷ Lerski admits that more than happenstance contributed to the Poles not securing the land. The lack of leadership, the election of Prehal as one of the land agents, Chlopicki’s antagonizing of American squatters in choosing occupied lands, and the loss of the good will of Gallatin, all contributed to the failure.¹²⁸

But the petitions and contrasting views by the American settlers define the failure of the Polish colony in different terms. While cautiously accepting the Poles at first, suspicion soon arose. Attacks on the character of the Poles eventually gave way to settlers’ claims based on the virtue of their republicanism. Frontier lands were best used by those who could improve them—the squatters. Congress had initially looked east across the Atlantic Ocean to import virtuous republicans and thought they found them in a group of Polish revolutionaries. Eventually, however, their view changed, and Congress began to look west, finding a commercial definition of republican virtue in the native-born Americans who were already living on and improving the frontier lands. The fire of republican liberty had passed from the swords of the revolutionaries to the plows of the settlers, from the East to the West.

¹*An Act Granting Land to Certain Exiles From Poland*, 23d Cong., 1st sess. (June 30, 1834), *Public Statutes at Large of the United States of America* (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1850), 4:743. Polish historian Jerzy Jan Lerski identifies some confusion as to whether there were 234 or 235 Polish exiles. As the congressional bill concerns itself with 235 Poles, that is the figure that will be used here, regardless of the exact number to have arrived on the Austrian frigates. See Lerski, *A Polish Chapter in Jacksonian America: The United States and the Polish Exiles of 1831* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1958), 208n4.

²*An Act Granting Land to Certain Exiles From Poland*.

³The squatters had settled on the land and the agent for the Poles had selected it prior to it being surveyed. Without a survey neither could obtain a patent (an original title) by purchasing the land from the government. However, by the time the survey was conducted both groups were trying to claim the land. As early as 1836 some portions of the area had been platted and some individuals obtained quitclaim deeds from earlier settlers such as Samuel Haight. It was understood, however, that only meant Haight no longer had a claim to the land, and the land would have to be purchased again from the federal government to perfect the title. See Charles A. Church, *History of Rockford and Winnebago County, Illinois: From the First Settlement in 1834 to the Civil War* (Rockford, Ill.: W. P. Lamb, 1900), 213–14.

⁴See Lerski, *Polish Chapter in Jacksonian America*.

⁵See Stasik, *Polish Political Emigrés in the United States of America, 1831–1864*, ed. James S. Pula, trans. Eugene Podraza (Boulder, Colo.: East European Monographs, 2002).

⁶See Rawlings, “Polish Exiles in Illinois,” in *Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society for the Year 1927*, Illinois State Historical Library Publication 34 (Danville: Illinois Printing, 1927), 83–104.

⁷W. H., “The Land Sale,” *Winnebago Forum* (Rockford), Nov. 29, 1843, 3, and “The Land Sale, No. II,” *ibid.*, Dec. 6, 1843, 3.

⁸See Church, *History of Rockford and Winnebago County*.

⁹Kraitsir blamed Albert Gallatin (chairman of a Polish committee in New York) and Samuel Gridley Howe (secretary of a Polish committee in Boston) for the failure of the land grant. See Kraitsir, *The Poles in the United States of America: Preceded by the Earliest History of the Slavonians and by the History of Poland* (Philadelphia: Kiderlen and Stollmeyer, 1837), 196.

¹⁰See James T. Kloppenberg, *The Virtues of Liberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 59–70; Daniel T. Rodgers, “Republicanism: The Career of a Concept,” *Journal of American History* 79 (1992): 11–38; J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (1975; repr., Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003); Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992).

¹¹Kloppenberg, *Virtues of Liberalism*, 66.

¹²Wood, *Radicalism of the American Revolution*, 278. While Wood discusses the late eighteenth and very early nineteenth century in his work, Daniel Walker Howe touches on the same theme in his work on the American Whigs. Howe notes that “while Jacksonian rhetoric emphasized ‘equality’ (restricted in practice to equality of opportunity for white males), Whig rhetoric emphasized ‘morality’—or ‘duties’ rather than ‘rights.’” See Howe, *The Political Culture of the American Whigs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 21.

¹³See R. F. Leslie, *Polish Politics and the Revolution of November 1830*, University of London Historical Studies 3 (1956; repr., Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1969), 96.

¹⁴See Lloyd Kramer, *Lafayette in Two Worlds: Public Cultures and Personal Identities in an Age of Revolutions* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 257.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 258.

¹⁶See William Appleman Williams, *America Confronts a Revolutionary World, 1776–1976* (New York: William Morrow, 1976), 94–95.

¹⁷“Letter From a Polish Officer,” *Niles’ Weekly Register* 44 (1833): 425–26.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰Lerski, *Polish Chapter in Jacksonian America*, 88–89.

²¹*Ibid.*, 88.

²²*Ibid.*, 92–93.

²³Stasik, *Polish Political Emigrés*, 38.

²⁴Lerski, *Polish Chapter in Jacksonian America*, 88–94; “On the Poles Transported from Dantsic,” *London Times*, Feb. 15, 1834, 6. The *London Times* article was a reprint of “From Prussia,” taken from the Feb. 6, 1834, issue of the *Prussian State Gazette*. See Lerski, *Polish Chapter in Jacksonian America*, 206n49.

²⁵“The Poles,” *Chicago Democrat*, Dec. 24, 1833, 3.

²⁶Lerski, *Polish Chapter in Jacksonian America*, 96.

²⁷Stasik, *Polish Political Emigrés*, 52.

²⁸“A considerable conscription has been made in New York for the relief of the Polish exiles, who have arrived in that city. One person unknown contributed \$200.” See *Niles’ Weekly Register* 46 (1834): 101. The *Chicago Democrat* informed readers that “The New Yorkers are doing a handsome thing for the Poles—several hundred dollars have been contributed for their aid. They are a brave, noble and unfortunate race, and God grant that they may find that peace here, of which tyranny has robbed them in their native land.” See *Chicago Democrat*, May 28, 1834, 2. A further report noted that “Bishop Dubois yesterday paid over to the Polish committee *nine hundred dollars* raised for the benefit of the Polish exiles in the different Catholic churches in this city—a praiseworthy example of liberality.” See *Niles’ Weekly Register* 46 (1834): 256.

²⁹Stasik, *Polish Political Emigrés*, 51–52.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 53–54, 69.

³¹*Granting Patents to Polish Exiles, &c.*, 24th Cong., 1st sess., 1836, H. Doc. 188, serial 289, 1.

³²*Ibid.*, 2.

³³Lerski, *Polish Chapter in Jacksonian America*, 130.

³⁴*Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774–1989: Bicentennial Edition* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1989), 731.

³⁵For a discussion of Jacksonian Democrats’ views on liberty versus tyranny and the virtue of an independent yeoman citizenry, see Harry L. Watson, *Liberty and Power: The Politics of Jacksonian America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006), 237–39.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 245; Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *The Age of Jackson* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1945), 347. Money from the sale of land would be used for internal improvements.

³⁷*Granting Patents to Polish Exiles*, 3.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 4.

³⁹*Ibid.*

⁴⁰Lerski, *Polish Chapter in Jacksonian America*, 135. Unfortunately the votes in the House of Representatives are not known, and passage of the bill was recorded in the *House Journal* as “The bill from the Senate (No. 158) entitled ‘An act granting a township of land to certain exiles from Poland,’ was read the third time, and passed as amended.” See *House Journal*, 23d Cong., 1st sess., June 28, 1834, 889. The Senate initially rejected the amendment requiring a ten-year residency before purchase, and the House took the matter up the following Monday, June 30, 1834. A motion that the bill be tabled failed with 48 yeas and 106 nays, with Illinois Representatives Zadock Casey, Joseph Duncan, and Charles Slade all voting against tabling the bill. The question of whether the House would insist on the amendment requiring a ten-year residency was submitted, and the House voted 83 to 68 to retain the amendment. On that matter Duncan voted to retain the amendment, while Casey and Slade voted to remove the amendment. See *House Journal*, 23d Cong., 1st sess., June 30, 1834, 904–6.

⁴¹A section equals one square mile of land, or 640 acres, unless geography such as a coastline rendered it smaller. Therefore the Polish Land Grant of 36 sections amounted to a total of 23,040 acres of land, or slightly less than 100 acres for each of the 235 Polish exiles. The voting was as follows: Yeas were Thomas Hart Benton (Mo., Democrat), John C. Calhoun (S.C., Nullifier), Henry Clay (Ky., Anti-Jacksonian), John Middleton Clayton (Del., Anti-Jacksonian), Thomas Ewing (Ohio, Anti-Jacksonian), Theodore Frelinghuysen (N.J., Anti-Jacksonian), Joseph Kent (Md., Anti-Jacksonian), John Pendleton King (Ga., Jacksonian), Nehemiah Rice Knight (R.I., Anti-Jacksonian), Samuel McKean (Pa., Jacksonian), Gabriel Moore (Ala., Jacksonian), Thomas Morris (Ohio, Jacksonian), Arnold Naudain (Del., Anti-Jacksonian), George Poindexter (Miss., Anti-Jacksonian), Alexander Porter (La., Anti-Jacksonian), Samuel Prentiss (Vt., Anti-Jacksonian), William Campbell Preston (S.C., Nullifier), Asher Robbins (R.I., Anti-Jacksonian), Nathaniel Silsbee (Mass., Adams), Nathan Smith (Conn., Anti-Jacksonian), Nathaniel Pitcher Tallmadge (N.Y., Jacksonian), John Tipton (Ind., Jacksonian), Gideon Tomlinson (Conn., Anti-Jacksonian), Daniel Webster (Mass., Anti-Jacksonian), William Wilkins (Pa., Jacksonian). A total of twenty-five yeas, with fourteen Anti-Jacksonians, seven Jacksonians, two Nullifiers, one Democrat, and one Adams voting in favor. Nays included John Black (Miss., Anti-Jacksonian), Bedford Brown (N.C., Democrat), Felix Grundy (Tenn., Democrat), William Hendricks (Ind., Adams), Isaac Hill (N.H., Jacksonian), Elias Kent Kane (Ill., Jacksonian), William Rufus de Vane King (Ala., Jacksonian), John McCracken Robinson (Ill., Jacksonian), Ether Shepley (Maine, Jacksonian), Benjamin Swift (Vt., Anti-Jacksonian), John Tyler (Va., Anti-Jacksonian), George Augustus Waggaman (La., Anti-Jacksonian), Hugh Lawson White (Tenn., Jacksonian), Silas Wright Jr. (N.Y., Democrat). Therefore there were a total of fourteen nays, with six Jacksonians, four Anti-Jacksonians, three Democrats, and one Adams voting against the bill. While there was no clear party or geographic split to the voting, it should be noted that both Illinois senators voted against the bill. See “Donation of Lands to Polish Patriots,” in *Register of Debates*, 23d Cong., 1st sess., May 12, 1834, 1723–24; *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, 612, 626, 680, 729, 789–91, 979, 1027, 1102, 1173, 1186, 1286–87, 1302–3, 1313–15, 1323, 1470, 1524–25, 1537, 1558, 1656–57, 1661, 1671, 1673, 1723, 1730, 1801, 1812, 1835, 1902, 1910, 1943, 1945, 1964, 1990, 2021, 2039, 2052, 2091–92.

⁴²“Exiles From Poland,” in *Congressional Globe*, 23d Cong., 1st sess., 1834, 375.

⁴³*An Act Granting Land to Certain Exiles From Poland*.

⁴⁴Gallatin estimates the cost at \$100 per person, minimum. While Gallatin debates using some of the aid money to send interested Poles, or at least a few of them as a trial, to Illinois in July of 1834 he does not appear to have done so. Lerski, *Polish Chapter in Jacksonian America*, 132, 137.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 141.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 144.

⁴⁸Stasik, *Polish Political Emigrés*, 65.

⁴⁹Most of the Poles who set out for Illinois stayed in the St. Louis area, ten in Vandalia, Ill., and five or six in Cincinnati. Most found employment in those areas and some married, with a few finding money to return to Europe. See *ibid.*, 66–67.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*

⁵¹Lerski, *Polish Chapter in Jacksonian America*, 132–33. The *Illinois Advocate and State Register* reported that the meeting occurred, and that its goal was to invite the Poles to settle in Illinois, but did not offer further details. See *Illinois Advocate and State Register* (Vandalia), May 31, 1834, 3.

⁵²Reverend John M. Peck, Illinois Secretary of State Alexander Pope Field, and Sidney Breese, were named as supporters. See F. Y. R., “For the Advocate,” *Illinois Advocate and State Register*, Dec. 27, 1834, 3.

⁵³*Ibid.*; “Recommendation for G. W. Carruthers,” ca. Apr. 1837, in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln: Supplement, 1832–1865*, ed. Roy P. Basler (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1974), 3. Then state representative Lincoln’s name appears on a petition recommending Carruthers for the post of secretary.

⁵⁴Lerski, *Polish Chapter in Jacksonian America*, 182.

⁵⁵The resolution was signed by Theo W. Smith (chairman), William C. Greenup, Samuel Houston, James Whitlock, John A. Wakefield, John Pierson, James Semple, J. J. Sawyer, John Dement, Sam McRoberts, R. Blackwell, E. C. Berry, Levi Davis, William Nicholson, Alex P. Field, Charles Prentice, William Lee D. Ewing, William Luin, Seth Y. Sawyer, R. K. McLaughlin, John D. Gorin, Thomas C. Kirkman, and William H. Brown. See *ibid.*, 183. The petition was not signed by Abraham Lincoln, and the present research has not indicated that Lincoln was involved with the Polish Land Grant in any capacity.

⁵⁶The letter urges readers to “Let us then show some return—show that we recognize in them the defenders of their rights and their liberties, against a despotism more cruel than that under which our fathers suffered, and which their fathers so nobly aided us by their valor and heroism in exterminating from the free soil of these United States.” See “To our Fellow Citizens of the State of Illinois,” *Chicago Democrat*, Sept. 10, 1834, 2; “To the friends of the brave, but unfortunate Poles,” *Illinois Advocate and State Register*, Nov. 19, 1834, 2.

⁵⁷“To the friends of the brave, but unfortunate Poles,” 3.

⁵⁸Watson, *Liberty and Power*, 194, 246.

⁵⁹James W. Fraser, *Pedagogue for God’s Kingdom: Lyman Beecher and the Second Great Awakening* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1985), 96; Lyman Beecher, *A Plea for the West*, 2d ed. (Cincinnati: Truman & Smith, 1835), 49.

⁶⁰See Leo Hershkowitz, “The Irish and the Emerging City: Settlement to 1844,” in *The New York Irish*, ed. Ronald H. Bayor and Timothy J. Meagher (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 16. For additional contemporary nativist and anti-Catholic writers, see Edward Beecher, Samuel F. B. Morse, and Elijah Lovejoy.

⁶¹Howe, *Political Culture of the American Whigs*, 161–62.

⁶²*New York Evening Star*, quoted in “The American Party,” *Chicago American*, June 27, 1835, 1.

⁶³*Ibid.*

⁶⁴“Introduction of Foreigners, and Foreign Influence,” *ibid.*, July 11, 1835, 2.

⁶⁵“Foreign Paupers,” in *Register of Debates*, 24th Cong., 1st sess., May 2, 1836, 1380–81.

⁶⁶*House Journal*, 25th Cong., 2d sess., Jan. 8, 1838, 235.

⁶⁷Lerski, *Polish Chapter in Jacksonian America*, 111.

⁶⁸*New York Courier and Enquirer*, quoted in *Sangamo Journal* (Springfield), Sept. 20, 1834, 3, and in “Polish Exiles,” *Illinois Advocate and State Register*, Sept. 10, 1834, 3.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*

⁷⁰*Ibid.*

⁷¹*Ibid.*

⁷²Lerski, *Polish Chapter in Jacksonian America*, 141.

⁷³Malcolm J. Rohrbough, *The Land Office Business: The Settlement and Administration of American Public Lands, 1789–1837* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 221–22.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 238–9.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 238.

⁷⁶Church, *History of Rockford and Winnebago County*, 211.

⁷⁷“It May Be Important,” *Western Gazette and Galena Advertiser*, Jan. 3, 1835, 3.

⁷⁸“The Poles,” *ibid.*, Jan. 10, 1835, 3.

⁷⁹For example, in the Pre-Emption Act of 1834 settlers merely had to prove cultivation and possession of land through a sworn affidavit to exercise pre-emption rights. See Rohrbough, *Land Office Business*, 217.

⁸⁰Dwight, *Things As They Are: Or, Notes of a Traveller Through Some of the Middle and Northern States* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1834), 250.

⁸¹*Ibid.*

⁸²“A Letter from the Venerable Niemciwicz,” *Western Gazette and Galena Advertiser*, Feb. 21, 1835, 2.

⁸³*Ibid.*

⁸⁴“The Poles,” *Niles’ Weekly Register* 47 (1834–1835): 406.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*

⁸⁶Stasik, *Polish Political Emigrés*, 76.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*

- ⁸⁸Ibid., 77.
- ⁸⁹“Polish Exiles,” in *Register of Debates*, 23d Cong., 2d sess., Feb. 18, 1835, 512.
- ⁹⁰Lerski, *Polish Chapter in Jacksonian America*, 144.
- ⁹¹Stasik, *Polish Political Emigrés*, 71, 79.
- ⁹²*Report from the Secretary of the Treasury, in Compliance with a Resolution of the Senate, in Relation to the Execution of the “Act Granting Land to Certain Exiles from Poland,”* 25th Cong., 3d sess., 1839, S. Doc. 56, serial 339, 5.
- ⁹³Lerski, *Polish Chapter in Jacksonian America*, 145.
- ⁹⁴Spaulding to May, Mar. 22, 1836, *American State papers*, 8, *Public Lands*, 8:644.
- ⁹⁵Spaulding also served as one of the clerks for the election, indicating further involvement in Rockford community affairs. See Church, *History of Rockford and Winnebago County*, 54.
- ⁹⁶Spaulding to May, 644.
- ⁹⁷Ibid., 645.
- ⁹⁸Ibid.; Lerski, *Polish Chapter in Jacksonian America*, 145.
- ⁹⁹Spaulding to May, 645.
- ¹⁰⁰Church, *History of Rockford and Winnebago County*, 211.
- ¹⁰¹Kent is identified as “Mr. G.” in the document, but other details, such as his construction of a saw mill, make it virtually certain “Mr. G” was Germanicus Kent. See “Polish Exiles,” in *Register of Debates*, 24th Cong., 1st sess., May 31, 1836, 4103–4.
- ¹⁰²Ibid., 4104.
- ¹⁰³Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁴*Chicago American*, Sept. 17, 1836, 2.
- ¹⁰⁵*Report from the Secretary of the Treasury*, 6–8.
- ¹⁰⁶Rohrbough, *Land Office Business*, 205–20.
- ¹⁰⁷*Report from the Secretary of the Treasury*, 9–10.
- ¹⁰⁸Ibid., 11–12.
- ¹⁰⁹*Documents Relating to the Alleged Encroachment of the “Polish Exiles” on Improved Lands in the Occupancy of Certain Citizens of the State of Illinois*, 25th Cong., 3d sess., 1839, S. Doc. 161, serial 340, 1.
- ¹¹⁰Ibid., 2.
- ¹¹¹Ibid., 3.
- ¹¹²Schlesinger, *Age of Jackson*, 346–47.
- ¹¹³*Petitions of a Number of Settlers on the Public Lands in Illinois, Praying That Their Pre-Emption Rights to Said Lands May Not Be Affected by the Grant to the Polish Exiles*, 26th Cong., 2d sess., 1840, S. Doc. 220, serial 378, 1.
- ¹¹⁴Ibid., 4–5.
- ¹¹⁵John Clayton, *The Illinois Fact Book and Historical Almanac, 1673–1968* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1970), 207.
- ¹¹⁶*Report from the Secretary of the Treasury*, 9–17.
- ¹¹⁷“Grants to Polish Exiles,” *Sangamo Journal*, Feb. 16, 1839, 3.
- ¹¹⁸Lerski, *Polish Chapter in Jacksonian America*, 149.
- ¹¹⁹Ibid., 147.
- ¹²⁰*Memorial of the Polish Exiles, Praying That They May Be Allowed to Settle and Cultivate the Lands Heretofore Granted to Them by the United States*, 26th Cong., 1st sess., 1840, S. Doc. 194, serial 357, 1–2.
- ¹²¹“Pre-emption Law—Mr. Anderson,” in *Congressional Globe*, 26th Cong., 2d sess., 1841, Appendix, 46.
- ¹²²Ibid., 44.
- ¹²³Kammen, *A Season of Youth: The American Revolution and the Historical Imagination* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 48–49, 43.
- ¹²⁴*An Act Relative to the Act Entitled, “An Act Granting Lands to Certain Exiles From Poland,” Approved, Thirtieth June, Eighteen Hundred and Thirty-Four*, 27th Cong., 2d sess. (Apr. 14, 1842), *Public Statutes at Large of the United States of America* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1856), 5:473.
- ¹²⁵In 1856 one of the exiles, Franciszek Wlodecki, successfully petitioned Congress for a grant of land and received 120 acres from the Polish Claim. See Lerski, *Polish Chapter in Jacksonian America*, 153–54.

¹²⁶While there were reports in the Boston press that fifteen in New Orleans died at the hands of wild Indians in Texas, Lerski reports that was officially denied by the Polish committee. See Lerski, *Polish Chapter in Jacksonian America*, 120.

¹²⁷Stasik, *Polish Political Emigrés*, 79.

¹²⁸Lerski, *Polish Chapter in Jacksonian America*, 154–55.