

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

Gender, Race and Welfare Addressed

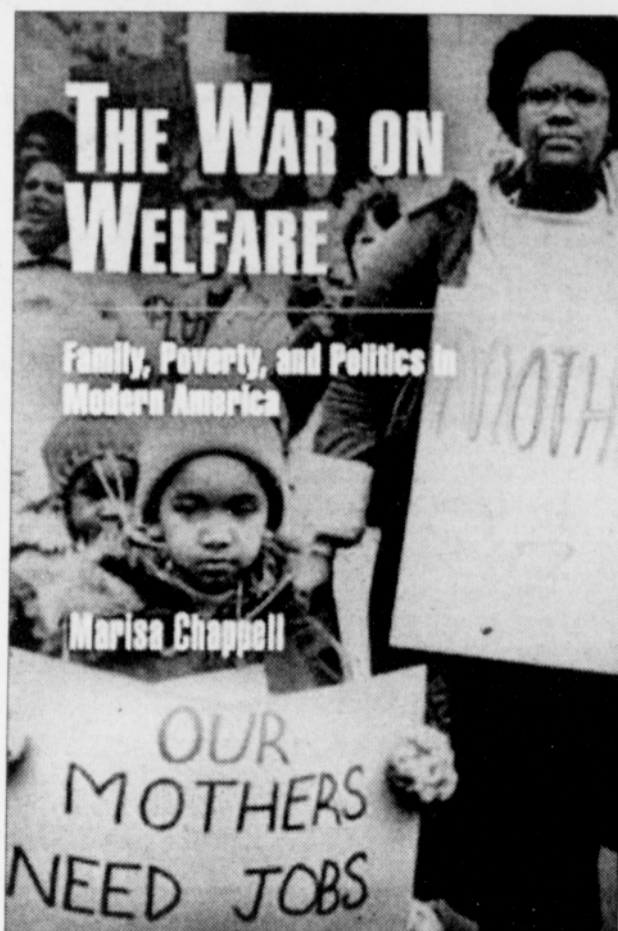
Author adds new layer to complex issue

BY JAKE THOMAS

In 1996 President Bill Clinton signed into law a bill that was promised to "end welfare as we know it."

The welfare reform bill drastically cut the amount of assistance given to needy families, and pushed scores of single mothers into jobs inadequate to support children.

The dominant narrative of why this part of the social safety net was ripped asunder holds that organized labor had become increasingly anemic, business interests reasserted themselves, and a resurgent conservative political movement had become a powerful presence—all against a blaring backdrop of claims that public assistance programs incentivized laziness and the dis-



solution of the traditional family.

But a new book by Oregon State University historian Marisa Chappell adds a new layer to the already complex issue.

"The War of Welfare: Family, Poverty, and Politics in Modern America" (University of Pennsylvania Press), argues that gender and race had as much to do with the reform of welfare as the changing political environment.

The central thrust of Chappell's book is that Great Society liberals of the 1960s were wedded to the idea of a "traditional" male-breadwinner model of the family prevalent in white families, and sought to extend it to disadvantaged social segments with wage supplements and full employment.

However, Chappell writes that these efforts "ran up against a conservative interpretation of welfare, poverty, and racial inequality", causing them to fall flat.

The ideal of the male-breadwinner fam-

ily became largely unattainable anyway, as the U.S. lost many high-paying manufacturing jobs.

The commitment of anti-poverty liberals to ideal of the male-breadwinner family, argues Chappell, helped create two tiers of public assistance programs. Unemployment Insurance and Social Security were viewed as legitimate because they were often tied to occupations held by male breadwinners, while programs supporting single mothers were left open to attack.

Chappell suggests that solutions like universal childcare, affirmative action, and support for single mothers while they worked their way out of poverty were marginalized by anti-poverty liberals fixated on creating male-breadwinner families.

In addition to providing a detailed political history of how the country has viewed welfare, the book inserts an overlooked dimension into an important topic.

New Look for Juneteenth

This year marks the 145th Anniversary of Juneteenth, the freedom celebration that honors the end of slavery in the United States.

Locally, Juneteenth Oregon is starting "anew" with a new name, a new committee, a new location and a new spirit, according to Doris Rush, current president of the Juneteenth Oregon Committee.

The group is sponsoring several events leading up to Juneteenth this year and they are:

A Juneteenth kick-off fundraiser show; which will be held at the Curious Comedy Club, 5225 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., on Sunday, May 30. Doors will open at 8 p.m. to be followed by live local talented performances, a fashion show and appetizers. The cost is \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door.

A Juneteenth church service, which will be held at Mt. Gillard Missionary Baptist Church, 2902 N.E. Rodney Ave., on Sunday, June 13, beginning at 3:30 p.m. Pastor A. W. Johnson of Morning Star Baptist Church will serve as guest speaker.

The Juneteenth Parade, Festival and Gospel Concert, will be held Saturday, June 19. The parade will begin at Wells Fargo Bank at 5730 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and Jarrett Street at 11 a.m. and proceed to the festival site at 5125 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. (empty lot at intersection of MLK &



Alberta), which will start at noon and go until 6 p.m.; A gospel concert will follow immediately, from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m.

For more information contact Doris Rush at 503-605-8252 or 866-735-1618, extension.4556, or email Doris.Rush@wellsfargo.com.

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