

Why do so many Americans practice martial arts? How did kung fu get its own movie genre? What makes mixed martial arts so popular? This book answers these questions for the first time with historical research. At the turn of the 20th century, the United States enjoyed a time of prosperity but feared that men were becoming soft. At the same time, the Japanese government sponsored research to develop the best fighting techniques for its new empire. Before World War II, American men boxed and Japanese men practiced judo and karate. Postwar Americans began adopting Chinese, Brazilian, Filipino and other fighting styles, in the process establishing a masculine subculture based on physical and social power. The rise of Asian martial arts in America is a fascinating untold story of modern history, from the origin of karate uniforms to the first martial arts themed birthday party. The cast of characters includes circus strongmen, professional cage fighters, an award winning comic book artist, the inventors of judo, aikido and Cornflakes, and Count Juan Raphael Dante, a Chicago hairdresser and used car salesman with the Deadliest Hands in the World. Readers will never look at taekwondo class the same way again.

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