

FMA

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Propagating the Filipino Martial Arts and the Culture of the Philippines

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The Adventures of

MESTESO MATT

the littlest eskrimador



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The FMA Informative with the permission of Punong Guro Marc Lawrence and LeRoid David is publishing this little story as a part of a reminder that even the littlest advertisements of the Filipino martial arts can bring about interest. And the FMA Informative believes that this story which was put out as a little booklet is of value in the promotion of the Filipino martial arts.

This book was created and written by Marc Lawrence of South Bay Filipino Martial Arts Club and Illustrated by LeRoid David and published in August 2009.

This was created as a children's book that was given away at Filipino martial arts events to the kid's. A very good little story that was highly appreciated by the kid's and also drew interest for them to join in on Filipino martial arts.



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Each issue features practitioners of martial arts and other internal arts, other features include historical, theoretical and technical articles; reflections, Filipino martial arts, healing arts, the culture of the Philippines and other related subjects.

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The Adventures of "Mesteso Matt" the Littlest Eskrimador

Chapter-1

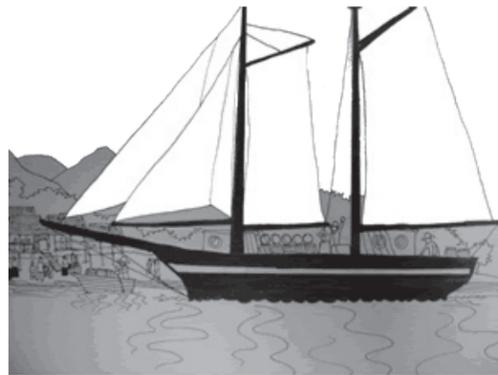
Matthew was born in little coastal village on the island of Cebu in the Philippines in the 1880s. The place where they lived was called a Barangay which means village. The people who lived there were fisherman, farmers, craftsmen and traders. This village was made up of ten families that had set the village. The village had good leader and he was called Datu Peraleno. The Datu or Chief was Matt's grandfather. Matt's mother was the Datu's daughter and her name was Melody. This was because her laughter was like a song. Matthew's father was named Mark and he was an American who had settled in the Barangay. Because Matthew was American and Filipino he was Mesteso, meaning mixed. So Matthew had the nick-name "Mesteso Matt" from when he was little.

Mesteso Matt's older brother was named Michael. He was very good with animals and people said he had gift with them. He loved to make music with his flute that he had made from hollowed out bamboo



Matt's Family Life

flute. Everybody in the village lived in little houses called Nipa huts. Mark Johnson was an American, who had come to the village with his schooner. His schooner was called The Adventurer. It was a small two masted sailing ship about 60 feet length and 16 feet wide. He had come to the village to trade, hire some local crew members and make repairs to his schooner. While he was there he met Melody, the Datu's daughter and fell in love. Matthew's father stayed on and helped the village with their trading to other islands. This gave the Barangay a good reputation for goods and crops. This also put the village at risk of being raided by other villages along the coast and other types of raiders by sea.



Learning Arnis

Because of this threat the Datu said that everyone in the village had to know how to defend it. The Datu and his two best fighters had to teach everybody how to fight with the method called "Arnis" All of the children had to train with sticks every morning and at night by the light of the moon. At night the men and women would get together after the chores and tell stories by Sayaw or dance about battles that had been fought, stories things gone by, and of magical times when the Earth was young.

When Mesteso Matt was 8 and his brother was 10 the family felt it was time the boys learned to defend themselves and their village. It was Uncle Jesse, melody's brother who had the task to teach the boys. Early in the morning before their chores their Uncle Jesse had two boys practice what they had learned with the sticks. Uncle Jesse would say when you go do your chores practice also. He would say "you take the Bolo and cut the banana bunches like this and like this. Like you are trying to make an X and then move it with your hand. When you cut the cane cut like this and like this, like you are trying to make an X. So Mesteso Matt would go and help his brother get the banana bunches and practice making his cuts.

Chapter-2

Making Sticks

On some days Mesteso Matt and his brother would have to go cut cane poles for the gardens. So they would go across the valley to the river where the cane grew the biggest and cut poles for his mother and Grand-

mother. The poles were used in gardens for vegetables that grew on vines. Sometimes they would cut rattan sticks for themselves. To be the right size they would make them no longer than their arm and as wide as their thumb. The boys would bring them home and dry them on the roof of their Nipa hut. When the sticks were dry they would smooth the rough ends with pieces of pumice stone from a distant volcano. Matt would have his father decorate his sticks with designs like roosters, snakes and spiders that he burned into the rattan sticks.

Practicing Basics



Their uncle Jesse would say to hold the rattan stick about two finger widths from the bottom and treat it like sword. He said it has a tip, a blade and butt like sword or a bolo. The boys would listen to their uncle and play games in the evening with children. Their favorite game was called king of the log. They would pretend to be raiders and other pirates and sword fight with their sticks on the log. The looser would be checked and pushed off the log. They would also chase each other around trees and the huts while stick fighting.

One day Mesteso Matt's Uncle Jesse said you need to learn the ranges for fighting. He said there is long range or Largo. This is when the tip of your weapon or stick can hit the hand of your opponent. Their hand is like a snake and the weapon is like the fangs of the snake. He said that if you hit their hand and they lose their weapon then is just like de-fanging the snake! Uncle Jesse said always de-fang the snake first! Matt ask how should I hit them, they may be too fast like the snake. Uncle Jesse said it is simple just up-down

then down-up. One of those strikes will get them always, even if the other one misses. Matthew asked his uncle what if his hand is not but his elbow is? Uncle said just hit whatever is sticking out! Uncle would say always lead with you weapon or weapon hand in front of you. Your right foot should be forward just like your right hand. Your feet should about shoulder wide, with you back foot facing forward.

Going to the Jungle

Mesteso Matt and his brother Michael loved to go to the jungle outside of the Barangay to get coconuts, bananas and mangos for their family. Michael would say to Matthew you can climb like monkey. Mesteso Matt could climb a tree with his bare hands and feet quickly but his older brother could not. Matt would climb up and gather the best fruit from the top of the tree. Sometimes the boys would visit their uncle Felix who had farm at the far side village. The boys would take Uncle Felix's Carabao with them sometimes so they would not have to carry out the sacks and baskets of the foods they found in the jungle.



Chapter-3

A Test of Courage

His Uncle Felix had talked one day with Matthew's father and said that Matthew is getting ready for a test of courage. So one evening when the family was visiting Uncle Felix's farm, Uncle Felix said to Matthew "Go get the Carabao from the stream" Matthew said "Uncle, it is far! His uncle said but you are strong! Matthew said it is dark and dangerous! Uncle said "you have your stick and the little bolo that you use to cut bananas, so go and be brave!"

So Matthew went in the dark down the path to place were the Carabao watered. As he walked along he heard the monkeys in the trees. He knew he could not be afraid or the monkeys would attack him. Matthew said to himself if any of the monkeys jump down from the trees, I will hit them with my stick! A little further along,



he heard a spotted jungle cat fighting with a monkey!

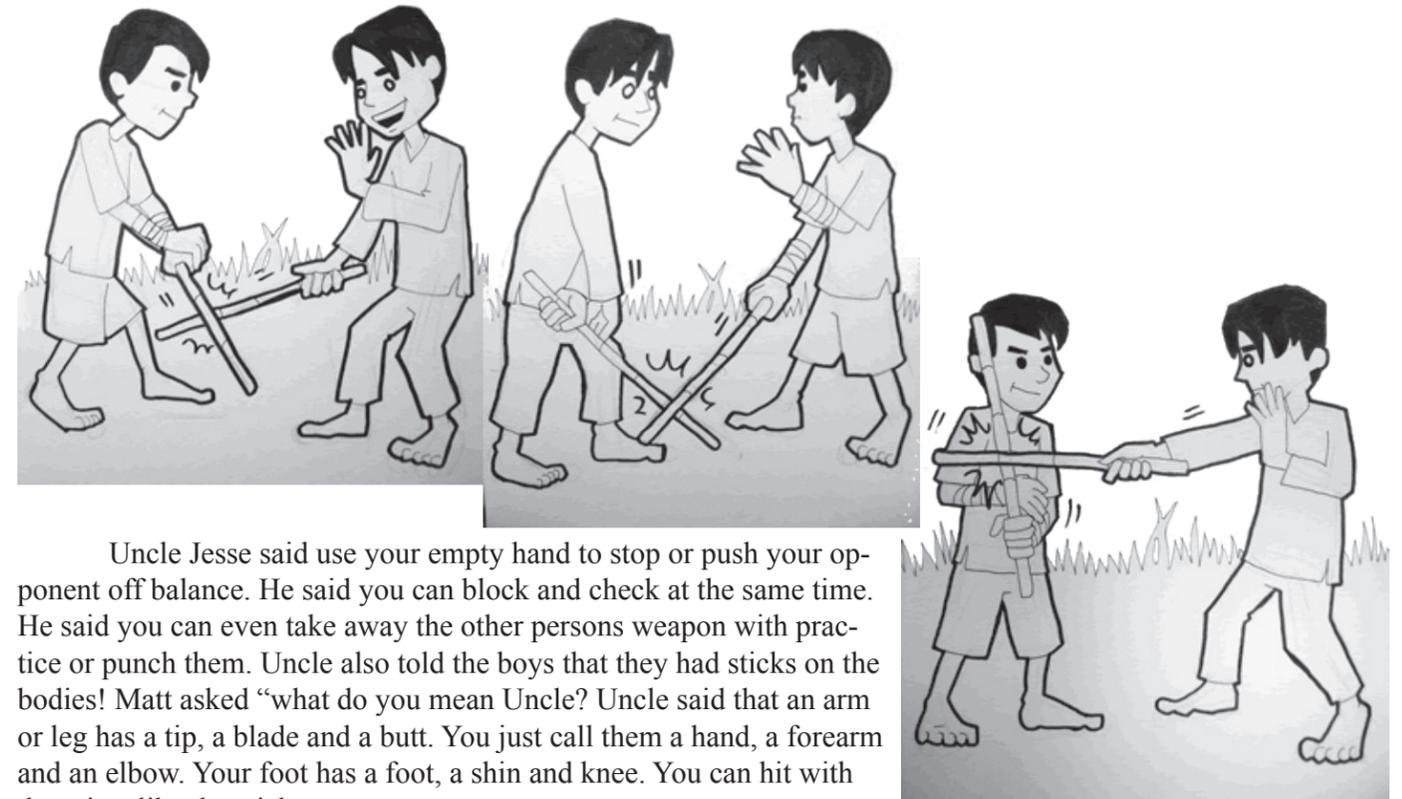
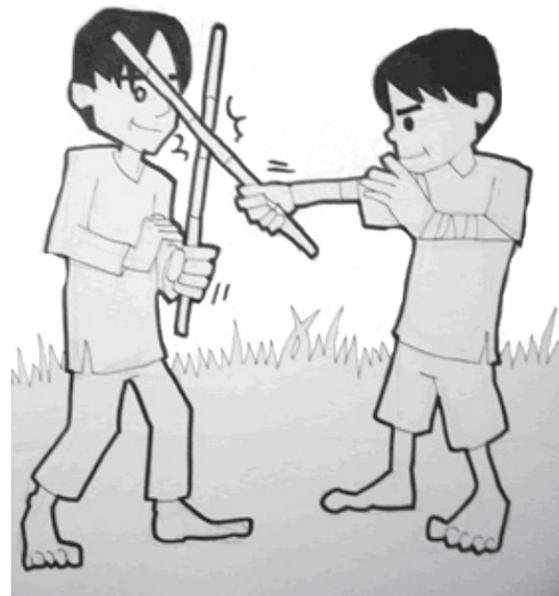
Matthew said to himself again that if the jungle cat was to jump out and come after me I could cut him with my bolo like a banana bunch! When he finally got to the stream with the Carabao he was so glad to take the rope and get on the Carabaos back and started walking back to the farm.

Learning to Fight

Early one morning Uncle Jesse said to the boys before starting their chores “You need to learn to fight closer with you sticks! The boys replied “we can de-fang the snake!” Uncle Jesse said but man is not a snake, a man is like the monkey and can be very tricky! So you must fight them closer in the medium range. So Uncle Jesse showed them the five basic strikes for the medium range. Michael asked “when do I know I am in medium range?” Uncle said “when you can hit a man on top of their head!” Uncle Jesse showed them the strikes. He said always use the tip or last three finger length of the stick to hit them. The first one was to the shoulder/neck with a forehand strike, the

second one was to shoulder/neck with back hand strike. The third was a forehand strike upward to the leg or the knee. The fourth was a backhand strike upward to the other leg or knee and the last and fifth was thrust to the belly. Matthew asked “why do I have to know so many strikes?” Uncle said because you have five fingers on your hand there are five strikes! Michael but what if I could reach his shoulders or neck like a grown man? Uncle Jesse said it is simple hit whatever part of the body is in front of you!

Then Uncle said” it is easy to hit but now you have to learn to block!” Uncle said blocking is like making the edges of the shield. If he strikes at you with forehand strike then you block with your stick straight like the side of the shield. If he strikes at you with backhand strike you block with your stick straight like the other side of the shield. Then if the strike at your head you hold your stick sideways above your head like the top of the shield. These three blocks make the doorway to the Nipa hut! If they thrust at you parry or push with your stick straight up and step to the side. If they strike at your right knee just sweep it aside to the left with your stick, if they strike at your left leg just sweep it aside to the right with your stick.



Uncle Jesse said use your empty hand to stop or push your opponent off balance. He said you can block and check at the same time. He said you can even take away the other persons weapon with practice or punch them. Uncle also told the boys that they had sticks on the bodies! Matt asked “what do you mean Uncle? Uncle said that an arm or leg has a tip, a blade and a butt. You just call them a hand, a forearm and an elbow. Your foot has a foot, a shin and knee. You can hit with them just like the stick.

Chapter-4

Making Toys and Happy Days

The children of the Barangay had no stores to go buy toys so they would make their own out of scraps of cloth, pieces of wood, string and pieces of tin from cans. The boys would go Uncle Felix’s farm because he could braid and wrap with leather made from goat hide. He would wrap the base of the boy’s sticks so that they would not slip out and be lost while playing stick fighting. Uncle Felix was known for his skill in making and using weapons made of wood, bone, shell and pieces of metal.

The boys always loved when their father would come back from trading with the other islands. He would carve things while at sea from wood like animals and little wooden warriors. He would bring special things like metal fish hooks for the boys to fish with and nice cloth for their mother to make cloths for special occasions.

Making Bows and Spears

One day their Lolo or Grandfather said to the boys “you should learn how to make bow or Pana like your Uncle Felix”. So he took the boys and showed them how to make a bow out of split rattan, how to tie the bow string, and make arrows from bamboo. They got the feathers from the chickens to make their arrows fly straight. Once the boys made their bows they would go practice hitting targets like the coco nuts up in the trees. Later that week their Uncle Felix said the bow is good but you should also make a Bankaw or spear out of bamboo with tips so that you can fish as well. The boys found that they could go hunting for small game in the jungle and fish from the shallows of the bay. They would bring this food home to their family.

Chapter-5

Raiders from the Sea

Being a coastal village there always was a concern about raiders from sea. The people of the village always looked forward to trading vessels that would come and visit. There were Chinese, Indonesian, Javanese, American, Hawaiian and English vessels that would visit their village. Most of these vessels just wanted to trade. But what they feared were sea raiders or pirates! The people of the village knew that sea raider would come to steal and take captives. The village would always keep a watch on the cove where the ships would have to anchor and long boats would have to row in.

One day while Mesteso Matt's father and crew was away at another island for trading. The men of the Barangay gone away in early morning to go hunting wild pigs for a celebration, a new coastal schooner came into the cove. This was one that had never sailed into the cove before. The sailors from the ship used their long boat to come ashore. There were six sailors in the long boat. The crew of the boat looked like rough men not like island traders.

When they came ashore one of the old men of the Barangay called Manong Espi said to the children that these men looked like rough men and do not trust them to act right. The sailors looked around the village and saw that there were just some old men, some women and children. The sailors said "We have come to trade for supplies" But the old man named Sunny who was crippled did not trust them so he signaled to the women working in the gardens and yards to gather the people for defense. The sailors said to themselves "we can just take what we want!" "There is no one to stop us!" The leader of crew said "Give us some supplies."

Manong Espi said "Yes but you must pay us in Spanish silver or trade goods!" While the old men were talking with the sailors the boys gathered around in semi-circle with their rattan sticks. The leader of sailors said "we will just take what we want!" All of the boys of the Barangay were listening and waiting for the signal. Just then the old man named Sunny gave a hand signal.

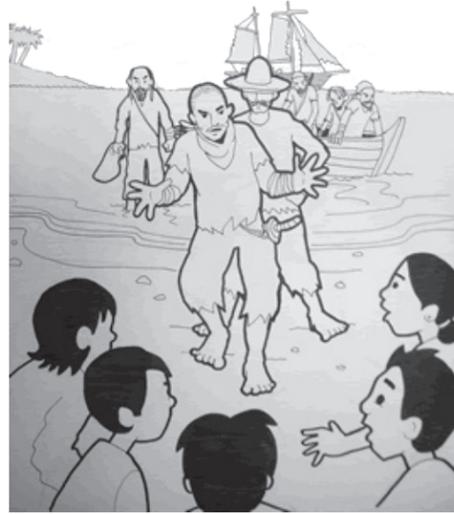
The boys quickly struck the sailors hands, arms and legs knocking them down to ground. The six sailors were

beaten very badly by the boys. The old men, women and children took away the sailors weapons and tied them up.

When the men of the hunting party came back late that afternoon, they were alarmed to see the schooner in the cove. They became more concerned when they could see the long boat on the beach in the cove. When the men of the hunting party came into the Barangay they found the women and children guarding their prisoners. Uncle Felix came and found the boys guarding the prisoners. Uncle Felix and Uncle Jesse listened to the boy's story. Their uncle was very proud that the boys had used their fighting art to protect their homes.

The Adventurer Returns

One week later Captain Mark Johnson and the crew of the Adventurer returned they were concerned



The boys attacked the sailors quickly before they could react.

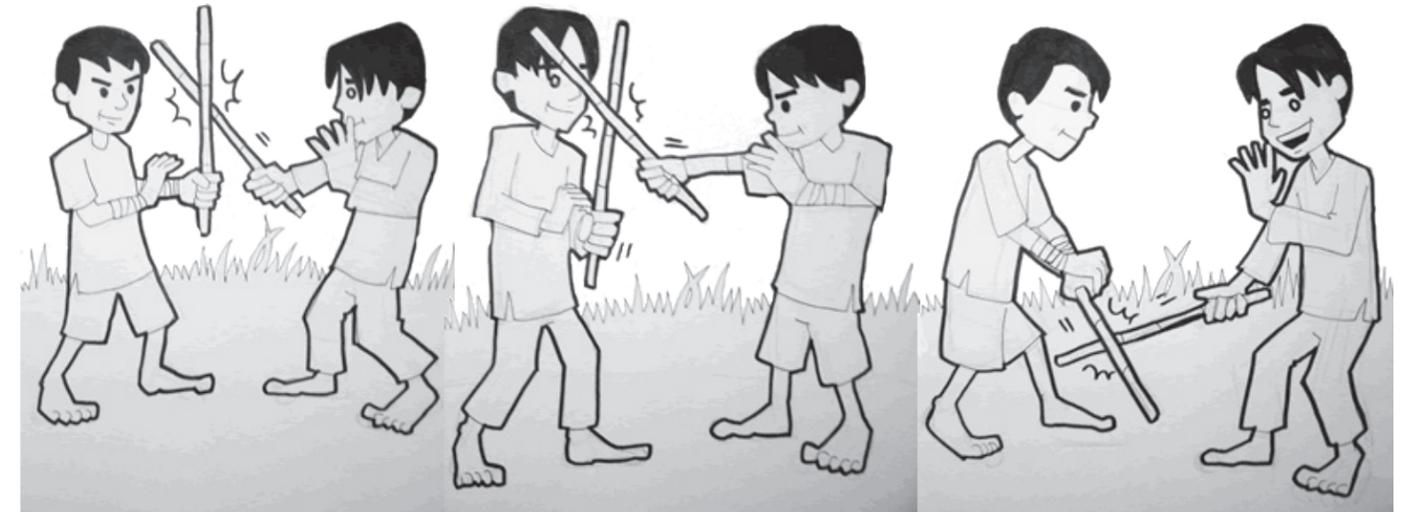


to see a coastal schooner in the cove that they did not recognize. When Captain Johnson and his crew came ashore, they were greeted their families who had quite a story to tell. Captain Johnson met his wife children at the beach. His boys quickly told him the story of the raiders and the fight in the village. He was very proud of his boys. He said you boys did the right thing at the right time. He said remember "There is a Time to Talk and a Time to Fight!"

Chapter-6

Special Note: You too can learn some of the basics of the Filipino Fighting Arts by practice the stick fighting called Arnis. Remember what the boys were taught by their families in the story. Go back and look at the pictures. Practice it with stick as big around as your thumb and as long as your arm. With your right foot forward, shoulder width apart, have your right hand holding the stick and have your left hand by your heart. Practice your Largo strikes 1-2, 3-4. Remember that Largo is when you can hit the hand. Practice your Media strikes 1, 2, 3, 4, and thrust for 5. Remember that Media is when you hit their head. Find a friend to practice with go slowly at first so you both can learn. Practice your blocking too, when you get good go outside practice like Mesteso Matt and his brother did around trees and on logs.

Cinco Terros - The Five Basic Strikes



Block-1 & Strike-1

Block-2 & Strike-2

Block-3 & Strike-3



Block-4 & Strike-4



Block-5 Parry & Strike-5 Thrust

School Submission

The schools listed teach Filipino martial arts, either as the main curriculum or an added curriculum.

If you have a school that teaches Filipino martial arts, or you are an instructor that teaches, but does not have a school, list the school or style so individuals who wish to experience, learn and gain knowledge have the opportunity.

Be Professional; keep your contact information current. - **Click Here**



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Emailed manuscripts should be typed in Ariel or Times Roman, on programs such as Notepad, Wordpad, Microsoft Word, Word Perfect and can be sent as an attachment. Photo(s) can be sent as a .jpg, .gif, .bmp, or .tiff - to submit material for either the FMA Informative Newspaper or an Issue **Click Here**

We welcome your article, ideas and suggestions, and look forward to working with you in the future.