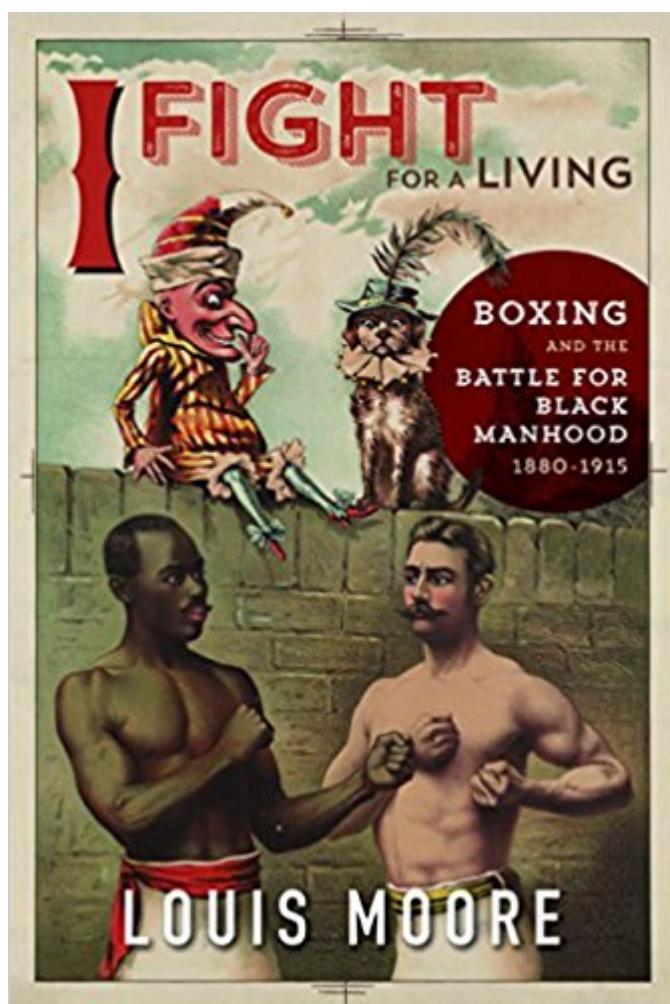


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I Fight For A Living: Boxing And The Battle For Black Manhood, 1880-1915 (Sport And Society)



Synopsis

The black prizefighter labored in one of the few trades where an African American man could win renown: boxing. His prowess in the ring asserted an independence and powerful masculinity rare for black men in a white-dominated society, allowing him to be a man--and thus truly free. Louis Moore draws on the life stories of African American fighters active from 1880 to 1915 to explore working-class black manhood. As he details, boxers bought into American ideas about masculinity and free enterprise to prove their equality while using their bodies to become self-made men. The African American middle class, meanwhile, grappled with an expression of public black maleness they saw related to disreputable leisure rather than respectable labor. Moore shows how each fighter conformed to middle class ideas of masculinity based on his own judgment of what culture would accept. Finally, he argues that African American success in the ring shattered the myth of black inferiority despite media and government efforts to defend white privilege.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Moore moves the reader beyond Jack Johnson by telling the stories of a generation of African Americans who labored with their fists at the beginning of the twentieth century. He weaves a narrative of migratory labor, racism, masculinity, and consumption that shaped the lives of working fighters. Although these pugilistic laborers could reach the height of fame and fortune, racism limited opportunities and financial mismanagement led to economic ruin. Moore describes how boxers such as Joe Gans tried to secure their manhood and livelihood through the ring. I Fight for a Living

reminds the reader that sports and labor need to be analyzed together."--Derrick E. White, coeditor of *Winning While Losing: Civil Rights, the Conservative Movement, and the Presidency from Nixon to Obama*

Hardworking prizefighters and the battle against a racist America

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