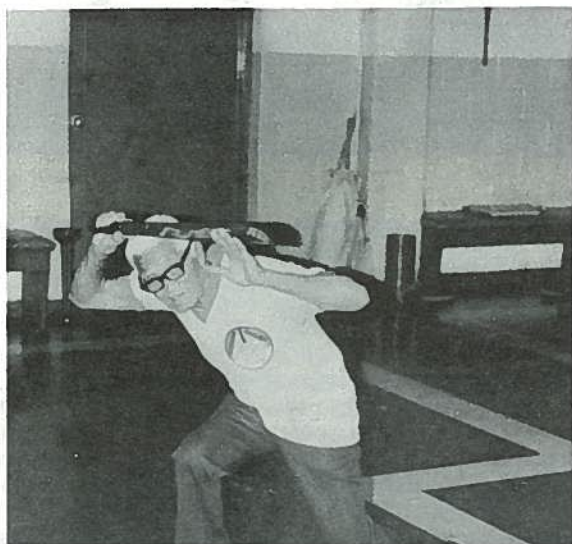


# OF THE PHILIPPINES



When peaceful coexistence finally came, the Filipinos learned of the tremendous wealth of the American nation and many flocked to Hawaii hoping to strike it rich and return home wealthy. Once in Hawaii, however, the immigrants found that the streets were not lined with gold, and that hard work six to seven days a week was the only way to earn small wages.

Escrima took a giant step forward at this point, because Escrimadors from all over the Philippines were brought together to work and live. Past suspicions and ethnic barriers were dropped because groups of plantation workers were responsible for their own section of land and their profits depended on the yield of their section. Competition for jobs was high because haoles, as well as Japanese and Chinese, were competing for the same jobs as the Filipinos.

When Filipino men were not working in the fields, they gathered to practice Escrima to keep up their timing and rhythm. Lasting friendships developed between masters who, were it not for immigration, would never have been brought together, much less become friends. Students were always relatives and children of close friends of the master. If you were lucky enough to be chosen to learn, it did not necessarily mean

you would get the knowledge. At times, a father would teach only one son to carry on, and his others would learn nothing. If there was any chance the son or relative would ever disgrace the art and there was no one to carry on, the father would usually choose to die with his knowledge rather than share it with an incompetent person. Unless the student was disciplined, respectful and humble, he was never taught.

Some of the elderly Filipinos in Hawaii remember the days when you could go to the Civic Auditorium and watch full-contact matches: two men with sticks but no protective gear fighting it out until one could not continue. Combatants were devoted to their master and his style, each believing his style was better than his opponent's, each ready to prove it in the ring. In 1929, the matches were outlawed in the Territory of Hawaii because of constant serious injury and two deaths which had resulted.



Today, there are only two recognized schools in the State of Hawaii: Master Raymond Tobosa's School and Kali, and the Pedoy School of Escrima, of which we are members. Our style, known as Derobio (defensive), is taught by Master Pedoy and his son, Chief Instructor Edward Pedoy. Both masters believe Escrima can be taught publicly, and both masters emphasize disarming techniques and defensive behavior rather than aggressive actions.

A student is first introduced to the art by learning basic exercises with a stick. He or she is shown the basic offensive strikes to the vital areas: head, neck, ribs, waist, stomach, groin and legs. These are practiced extensively before the student is permitted to advance to basic defensive blocks and counter-offensive moves. Again, repetition is the key. After many years of basics, more advanced forms are practiced, "doblebata" (two sticks), "espada y daga" (sword and dagger), "saboy" (one long stick) and staff (two-handed stick).

One of the most exciting forms is "one for one," in which a strike is delivered, blocked by the opponent who follows with a strike to the closest area immediately after the block. This form can continue for long periods, and is the closest thing to actual fighting. Again, there are variations such as hand-against-weapon and hand-against-hand. The most advanced forms of Escrima are counter-for-counter movements which determine a loser when he cannot counter the other's move. Emphasis is placed the student's ability to learn and progress, and advanced ranks are achieved based on the observations of instructors rather than the length of time spent in the class. One student might advance quickly while another may be slow to learn.

