



American Fun: Four Centuries of Joyous Revolt

John Beckman

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Here is an animated and wonderfully engaging work of cultural history that lays out America's unruly past by describing the ways in which cutting loose has always been, and still is, an essential part of what it means to be an American.

From the time the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, Americans have defied their stodgy rules and hierarchies with pranks, dances, stunts, and wild parties, shaping the national character in profound and lasting ways. In the nation's earlier eras, revelers flouted Puritans, Patriots pranked Redcoats, slaves lampooned masters, and forty-niners bucked the saddles of an increasingly uptight middle class. In the twentieth century, fun-loving Americans celebrated this heritage and pushed it even further: flappers "barney-mugged" in "petting pantries," Yuppies showered the New York Stock Exchange with dollar bills, and B-boys invented hip-hop in a war zone in the Bronx.

This is the surprising and revelatory history that John Beckman recounts in *American Fun*. Tying together captivating stories of Americans' "pursuit of happiness"—and distinguishing between real, risky fun and the bland amusements that paved the way for Hollywood, Disneyland, and Xbox—Beckman redefines American culture with a delightful and provocative thesis.

(With black-and-white illustrations throughout.)

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