

Teaching Surf Instructors to Teach



National Surf Schools and Instructors Association Instructors and Coaches Training Manual

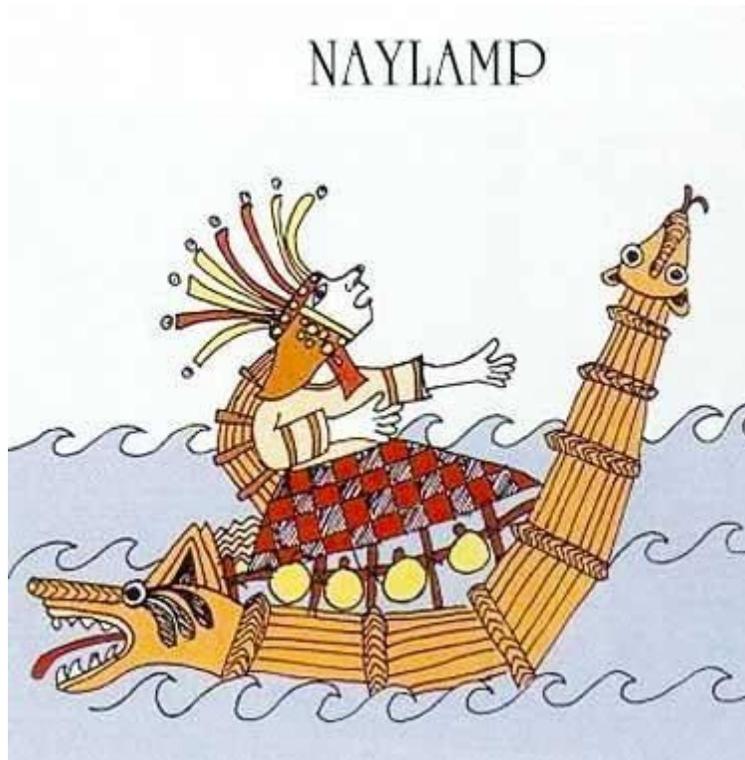


History of the Sport - Early Part 3

*Provided exclusively for NSSIA certified instructors.
Other use prohibited by US Copyright Laws*

History of the Sport (At Least as Best We Can Tell)

Before the Incas or the Spanish, the ancient Moche and Chimu cultures inhabited the north of Peru. Their communities along the coast depended greatly on fishing as a means for food. Their boats were ancient reed kayaks known to the Spanish as caballitos de totora made of bounded reeds. To get back to shore, the fisherman would normally surf the waves. They would use wooden paddles to generate speed like a canoe, they'd paddle themselves into waves standing up or riding them like a horse. According to Moche and Chimu pottery art, this method of riding waves after fishing has been practiced for at least the last 2000 years. There is even evidence in the pottery art that the waves were ridden for fun and not just out of necessity. There is significant evidence that the Peruvians expanded to Polynesia through transpacific navigation.



The first settlers of Hawaii probably came from the Marquesas Islands, near today's French Polynesia, far to the south of Hawaii. They are said to have arrived in Hawaii around 500 AD. Although no one knows for sure exactly where and when stand-up surfing began, there is evidence suggesting the sport of wave-sliding was practiced in the Sandwich Isles (Hawaii) during these ancient times.





Of the ancient Hawaiians who surfed, it was the ruling class that promoted surfing the most. The class system also determined how, why and with what materials surfboards were to be made. Ruling class surfboards were between 14 and 16 feet long and made from buoyant wood. The commoner's board was smaller, 10 to 12 feet,

Ancient Koa Plank

made from a denser wood. A board shaper was called a Kahuna. The oldest surfboard still in existence is on display in Hawaii's Bishop Museum and dates back to 1778.

Captain James Cook discovered the Hawaiian Islands on his second voyage to the Pacific, but on his third return trip in 1779 he encountered a hostile environment. This led to an encounter with the local natives and he was subsequently killed in 1779.

When John Whitman and then later C.S. Stewart and other missionaries began arriving in the Hawaii from New England around 1820, they



Koa board at the entrance of Princes Kaneamuni's tomb



George Carter's version of the death of Captain Cook in 1779

preached that surfing was hedonistic and a wastrel's activity. Because of their strict Protestant teachings, surfing became nearly extinct by the end of the century, with the sport practiced primarily in traditional Hawaiian games. It was the Waikiki Beach area of Oahu where the few Hawaiians still surfing were concentrated. Among those surfers



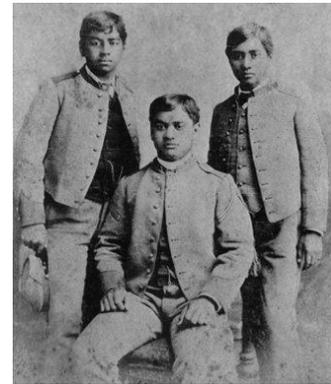
Early ship visiting Polynesian waters

was one of the last of the Hawaiian noble class, Princess Kaiulani. Her popularity with the people helped ensure the sport would survive during this critical time.

Although documentation is sketchy, the



history of surfing in California dates back to 1885. At that time, three Hawaiian princes were attending school in San Mateo. David Kawanakoa, Edward Keliiahonui and Jonah Kuhio Kalaniana'ole, left their boarding school at St. Matthew's in San Mateo and hopped on a train to the ocean for a fortnight's holiday.



The beach was packed all that summer, with swimming races taking place, revelry in the many dance halls & bathhouses lining shore, and a theatrical troupe performing on a stage along the sand.

But everyone was distracted from their old time amusements when the three Hawaiians took to the waves at the mouth of the San Lorenzo River on massive boards cut out of local redwood. The locals on shore spent those days amazed by & admiring the princes' surfing exhibition, with the Santa Cruz band capping off the season with a big bonfire party & feast for the three princes.



The trio left Santa Cruz & eventually sailed back to the islands to stand up for Hawaiian independence, but their influence over California stuck.



George Freeth Dedicating the Huntington Beach Pier in 1914

In 1896 the local 'Santa Cruz Surf' newspaper remarked that, "nowaday boys who go on a swimming spree at Seabright Beach use surfingboards to ride the breakers, indeed, most like the ones displayed by the visiting Hawaiians."

Another record of an individual surfing the US mainland is a poster and article in the Police Gazette of Saturday August 18,

1888 showing a girl surfing Asbury Park, NJ. The title says "A Gay Queen of the Waves: Asbury Park New Jersey Surprised by the Daring of a Sandwich Island Girl."



George Freeth - The First West Coast Surfer

The real revival of the sport took place after the turn of the century when a large number of Honolulu residents started surfing on a regular basis at Waikiki. Then, in 1907, George Freeth came to Redondo Beach, California, to demonstrate surfing as a publicity stunt. Freeth stayed on in Redondo Beach and became its first lifeguard, thus bringing an exciting "new" sport to the US mainland.

Another prominent individual in the revival movement was Alexander Hume Ford. He was a mainlander who loved surfing so much that he took on its revival and popularization as his mission in life. In 1907, Ford organized and formed the Outrigger Canoe Club, for the

purpose of "preserving surfing on boards and in Hawaiian canoes".

In 1912, a few years after George Freeth's heyday, legendary surfer Duke Kahanamoku stopped in California on his way to Stockholm, Sweden for the summer Olympics. While in

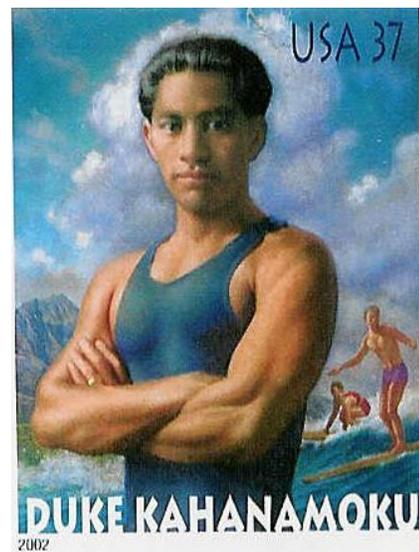




Photo by International Newsreel. HERE IS THE GENUINE ARTICLE IN HAWAIIAN SURF-BOARDS. IF YOU HAVE NEVER SEEN A REAL SURF-BOARD, SUCH AS THE NATIVES OF HAWAII USE WHILE RIDING THE WAVES OFF WAIKIKI, HERE IS ONE. IN CASE YOU DON'T CARE A HOP ABOUT SURF-BOARDS AND WE HOPE, THE TWO GIRLS IN THE PICTURE ARE TRYING TO ASK LEFTY AND BARBARA KENT, BOTH ARE UNDER CONTRACT TO UNIVERSAL PICTURES CORPORATION. WE HOPE BARBARA DOESN'T FORGET TO UNSTRAP HER WRIST-WATCH WHEN SHE GOES INTO THE WATER.

California, Kahanamoku held surfing demonstrations in Corona del Mar and Santa Monica, spurring more interest in the sport across the California beaches.

It was Olympic champion, Duke Kahanamoku who brought surfing into its own as a sport.

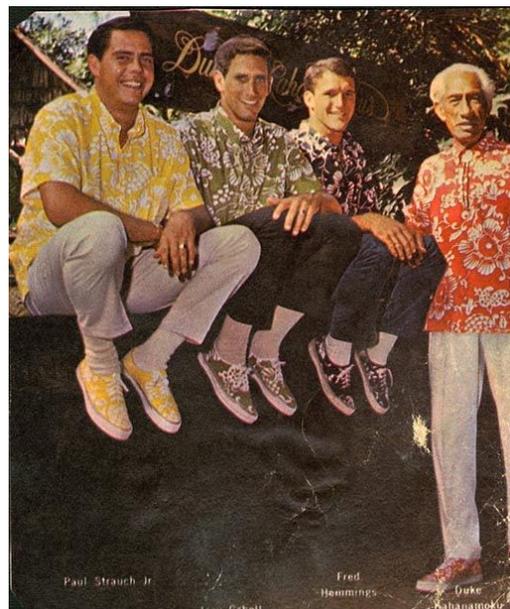
During the first half of the 20th century, Duke Paoa Kahinu Mokoe Hulikohola Kahanamoku -- known to most as Duke or The Duke, and as Paoa to Hawaiian and long time island friends -- "emerged as the world's consummate waterman, its fastest swimmer and foremost surfer, the first truly famous beach boy," wrote biographer Grady Timmons.

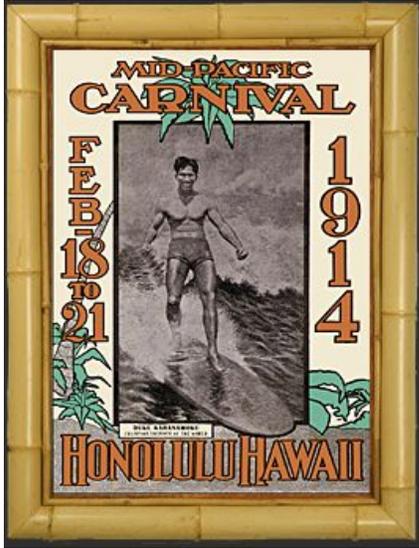
Duke Kahanamoku is best known to surfers as, "the father of modern surfing. As a sign of Duke's importance to the sport, one of his early surfboards, with his name across the bow, is preserved

in the Bishop Museum in Honolulu.

Born on August 24, 1890, "he was among the last of the old Hawaiians, raised next to the ocean at Waikiki," wrote Timmons. As the eldest son, Duke was named after his father. His father was named "Duke" in July 1869, following an official visit to the islands from the Duke of Edinburgh. At that time some families named their sons after that Duke.

When Duke gained worldwide recognition for his Olympic swimming gold medals, there were attempts made to link him to royalty because of his name. Duke would always humbly reply, "My father is a policeman."





Duke was baptized in the ocean according to ancient custom. His father and uncle took him out in an outrigger canoe when he was a small boy and threw him into the surf.

"It was swim or else," Duke later recalled. "That's the way the old Hawaiians did it." Duke and his brothers were encouraged by both parents, and, no doubt, other relatives as well.

His brother

Sargent remembered, "Mother used to tell her children, 'Go out as far as you want. Never be afraid in the water.'" Waikiki Grammar School was located directly across from the beach. After school, the only logical thing for the kids to do was hit the water. Attending the school along with Duke were his sister and five brothers; Sam, Dave, Billy, Louis and Sargent. "All we did was water, water, water," Louis remembered. "My family believes we come from the ocean. And that's where we're going back."



*Bud Higgins and Gene Belshe
With Their First Boards*

By the 1920s there was a lot of interest in surfing, particularly in Hawaii as the Police Gazette article below shows.

On the mainland in 1926, Captain Sheffield from England built a bathhouse and locker room on the rocks in the entrance of the harbor channel in Corona Del Mar. The surf: in the entrance of the channel was excellent for board riding with nice sand and waves braking far out at the bell buoy. There were no surfboards on the coast except the one belonging to George Freeth of Redondo Beach and it was a very makeshift one made of several boards with cross p1eces nailed to bold it together.



Tom Blake



1928 Catalina

Duke Kahanamoku and two other Hawaiians came to California to make a movie and spotted the surf at Corona Del Mar. They surfed the break and kept their boards at Captain Sheffield's. It was during that time that Huntington Beach's Bud Higgins first saw these boards, talked to the Hawaiians and invited them to surf the Huntington Beach Pier. After surfing Huntington Beach they stashed their 11 feet long and 18 inches wide boards locally and left for home. Before leaving however, they taught Bud and his lifeguard friend and eventual surf partner Gene Belshe how the boards were made and that if they made new boards, they should not be longer than 10 feet.

Gene and Bud decided to make new boards in August 1927, thus becoming California's first home-grown shapers. They went to the San Pedro Lumber Company to inquire about light wood. Finding that they could buy a solid plank of kiln dried redwood 20 feet long, 24 inches wide, and 3 inches thick for \$40, they purchased the plank together, then cut it in two so they would each have a 10-foot board. Laying the planks out on two 50-gallon drums, the outlines were drawn. Then using a block plane and drawknife, the boards were shaped. After sanding and smoothing, the boards were first shellacked and then two coats of varnish were applied. When completed, the boards weighed about 135 pounds each. In order to carry them, they had to be stood on end and then eased onto your back.

These early boards had no skegs and were very slippery on top. They were also very difficult to maneuver and due to their length, nosedived regularly. When they went down they came back up flying in the air and if the surfer was struck with one they were usually injured. Many surfers suffered cuts requiring stitches.



Pacific Coast Surfboard Championships - 1928

In the 1920's, a surfer named Tom Blake invented the hollow paddle board. His idea was to create a lighter board than the heavy planks of the time. The pictures are Tom's 1928 Catalina Paddle Board and a picture of him surfing a wave on one of his boards.

By 1928 there were enough surfboards on the West Coast to hold the first surf contest. Bud Higgins was in this event and his granddaughter, Gay Treece provided the picture of several surfers on a wave who also competed. The Newport Beach Chamber of



Corona Del Mar Contest - 1928

Commerce sponsored this first California contest, the Pacific Coast Surfboard Championships. It was held at Corona Del Mar drawing some 25 entries. Considerable rivalry existed between the local Orange County riders and a group from Santa Monica at the time. The winners cared little for the trophies as the surf was up and they wished to continue surfing when the contest ended. The next surfing contest was at Huntington Beach in 1933 and was sponsored by the Huntington Beach Life Guards. The surf was large and the contest won by Dave Beall of Santa Ana.



Buddy Myers, owner of the Pacific Systems Homes in Southgate also owned a large woodworking mill and manufactured the first commercially made surfboards. He had Tom Blake of the Santa Monica Life Guards design a ten-foot board that he put it into mass production about 1936, selling for \$40 each. He also manufactured a fine 14-foot life saving paddleboard with a Balsa core and mahogany top and bottom. This board was a huge success and changed life saving from using the

dories to paddle boards, causing most lifeguards to learn surfing.

Most surf historians credit Tom Blake with developing the first surfboard skeg in 1935. However, as the photo shows, fins on boards were in use during the late 1920s. The development and evolution of the skeg didn't really take off until after WW2.

Beginning in the early 30's, there was a push by surfers to improve the designs and lighten the boards to better enhance the individual's skills. Pete Peterson found a solid blond colored

wood board on the beach in Hawaii that led to the next big step in surfing. This board was the same shape as his redwood board but it weighed only around 40 lbs. The board was made in Florida with balsa wood. Once the word got out, it wasn't long before everyone wanted boards made from this new type of wood.

