

Benjamin Marcus – History of Skateboard

MIKE DOYLE 1955

I was skateboarding from 1955 on, we were using metal wheels ,, We went on hills that we thought we could make. There was not much turning. The streets were to rough for the metal wheels so we had to stick to the side walk. Downhill runs and the thrill was trying to make the corner without slipping out and have to bail out in the the ivy parkway if you were lucky enough to have ivy. I always think even today how we survived, what if we landed on an upright sprinkler. My driveway was called Little Waimea and to take it on an angle and make a 4" drop at the bottom and come out on the sidewalk and not the grass was a real challenge. Many years later while on a boat in Tonga there was a guy named J.P. who told me that after I moved from Westchester his gang would ride my driveway. By then I was something of a surf Icon and these grems wanted to be like me. I got a laugh out of that. Later I became captain of the Makaha skateboard team and took the hot little kids on tour to Dept stores that carried the product.

DENNIS SHUFELDT

Like Mike said, "it's a wonder we survived"...we had many long sidewalk runs in our neighbor. One in particular was a long sweeping lefty that the pickleweed plants that grew off the embankment onto the sidewalk would encroach upon the sidewalk and leave a narrow path, and as the wheels would hit the sidewalk separations you kept creeping further out to the edge of the sidewalk. Sometimes we would have to "Bailout" into the pickleweed. We would come up with green stains all over our clothes.

Those were like Badges of Courage.

On occasion a few of us would create a train of sorts...1 or 2 of us with skateboards, usually in the rear, someone with a red wagon in the middle spot and someone with a make-shift coaster made out of 2x4's,wagon wheels and steered with your feet and pulling on a rope attached to the front wheel arms. We would "Bomb" hills completely out of control.

The parents in cars probably thought we were completely retarded or something.

Some of our parents worked in the Aerospace industry and they would bring home fabric & foam remnants and we would upholster the tops of our boards and make them more "cushy" to ride, keep in mind we road "Barefoot". Some of the girls in the Neighborhood would ride the longboards made out of 2 pieces of 1 x 8 stacked on top of each other and padded with upholstery, they would ride tandem sitting down...there were some rather "custom rides" we made around 59'....Let me know when you need some info about the early 60's.