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Moser/Pacific Passages

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Introduction

Surfriding has not changed much over the centuries. A surfer paddles a board out to the waves and rides back toward shore. Then does it again. Surfboards have become shorter and lighter, the addition of fins has improved maneuvering, but the basic procedure—with the exception of recent innovations in tow-in surfing—has remained the same for possibly a thousand years or more.

What have changed substantially over the centuries are the images—in the broad sense of representations—that have introduced this Oceanic sport to primarily Western audiences. First documented in the journals of Captain Cook’s mariners, later in sketches that accompanied travel narratives to the Pacific, ultimately in photographs and film, surfriding has undergone transformations as diverse and complex as the cultures in whose records it appears. These surfriding images typically reveal more about the culture *imagining* (or imaging) than the culture *imagined* (or imaged).

One of the first written accounts of surfriding offers an example of this process. David Samwell, surgeon’s mate aboard Captain James Cook’s *Discovery*, made the following observation when the ship pulled into Kealakekua Bay in January 1779: “Thus these People find one of their Chief amusements in that which to us presented nothing but Horror & Destruction.” Samwell categorized surfriding as an “amusement” because Europeans did not imagine that such activity could find a place within a larger spiritual belief system (as surfriding in fact did in Polynesia). His “Horror & Destruction” betrays land-based cultural values formed within a European tradition that associated the ocean—even water in general—with disease and death.¹ Witness the following words from pilgrim William Bradford’s *Of Plymouth Plantation* (1620–1647) derived from this same tradition. Describing his group’s first landing in the New World in 1620, Bradford wrote: “Being thus

arrived in a good harbor, and brought safe to land, they fell upon their knees and blessed the God of Heaven, who had brought them over the vast and furious ocean, and delivered them from all the perils and miseries thereof, again to set their feet on the firm and stable earth, their proper element.”²

Recognizing that Europeans considered land their “proper element” provides an initial context for understanding the stunning cultural differences perceived by Captain Cook’s mariners. Surgeon’s Mate William Ellis noted: “We never saw a people so active in the water, which almost seems their natural element.” Surfing in particular highlighted these differences as Hawaiians—described on this same trip as “almost amphibious”—were seen riding waves that Europe’s hardiest seamen, in the words of David Samwell, “could look upon as no other than certain death.” Fear and horror, astonishment and admiration: these were the contradictory responses associated with the first Western descriptions of surfing.

And yet contradiction is to be expected. “The literature of encounter,” note the editors of the South Seas anthology *Exploration & Exchange*, is “richly paradoxical.”³ Amid the most extreme observations of cultural difference, human affinity maintains its influence: “God of creation,” wrote Corporal of Marines John Ledyard, commenting on the thousands of Hawaiians who streamed into Kealahou Bay to greet Cook’s ships, “these are thy doings, these are our brethern and sisters, the works of thy hands, and thou are not without a witness even here where for ages and perhaps since the beginning it has been hid from us, and though the circumstance may be beyond our comprehension let it not lessen the belief of the fact.”⁴ Ledyard’s certainty of kinship with the Hawaiians contrasts strongly with the images proliferated by the next significant group of Westerners to impact surfing: New England Protestant missionaries.

“Can these be human beings!” observed Hiram Bingham as members of the first missionary expedition to Hawai‘i looked upon natives some forty years after John Ledyard.⁵ Bingham’s mission of making the “almost naked savages” worthy of Heaven involved transforming the image of surfing and other native traditions that did not square with the religious and cultural values of the New Englanders. Although Bingham wrote an account of surfing that showed his fascination with a surfboard “wrought exceedingly smooth, and ingeniously adapted to the purpose of gliding rapidly in the water,” he nevertheless placed surfing among those evils that degraded moral values and jeopardized souls. Bingham recorded the following incident where missionary-trained Hawaiian

Thomas Hopu became a *porte-parole* for Calvinist morality to the high chiefess Ka‘ahumanu:

Kaahumanu, though informed, at the same time, that the morrow was the Sabbath, and invited to attend public worship, went, the next morning, with *Taumuarii* [Kaumualii] to *Watiti* (Witete) [Waikīkī] and drew a great multitude after, to spend the Sabbath there playing in the surf. In the afternoon Messrs. Bingham and Thurston, and Hopoo [Thomas Hopu], followed them, and at evening proposed to preach to them, in case they desired to hear the word of God. They consented, and the Lord’s prayer was expounded to them. *Kaahumanu* asked Hopoo what he meant by saying to one of her servants, in the morning, that if he did not keep the Sabbath, he would be burned. Hopoo had said to one of them, as they were going to their sports, that men who do not observe the Sabbath of the Lord, will go “*i ke ahi a roa*” (to the endless burning).⁶

By such means did the missionaries exert their influence to transform the image of surfriding, in this case for the Hawaiians themselves. By 1829 Bingham could look back upon the changes that had occurred during his first nine years on O‘ahu and boast: “the slate, the pen, and the needle, have, in many instances, been substituted for the surf-board, the bottle, and the *hula*.”⁷

The observations of Englishman William Ellis, one of the most knowledgeable missionaries in the Pacific (he had spent six years in the Society Islands before arriving in Hawai‘i in 1822), also show the strong impact of the Protestants. Ellis commented that the decline of native traditions in Tahiti was “on no account, matter of regret.” He added: “When we consider the debasing tendency of many, and the inutility of others, we shall rather rejoice that much of the time of the adults is passed in more rational and beneficial pursuits.” Later, during a visit to the island of Hawai‘i, Ellis passed an unusually quiet Sunday—“No athletic sports were seen on the beach; no noise of playful children, shouting as they gambol’d in the surf”—and he concluded: “It could not but be viewed as the dawn of a bright sabbatic day for the dark shores of Hawaii.”⁸

The missionaries largely succeeded in transforming the image of surfriding for many native Hawaiians (Ka‘ahumanu, de facto ruler of the Islands, converted to Christianity in 1825). Ellis’s Western audience would have been a disappointment to him: his lengthy description of surfriding in *Narrative of a Tour through Hawaii* (1826) became the most popular

reference for nineteenth-century travelers seeking to witness, even try for themselves, this exciting native sport. Ellis's vivid tableau ends with these stirring words: "but to see fifty or one hundred persons riding on an immense billow, half immersed in spray and foam, for a distance of several hundred yards together, is one of the most novel and interesting sports a foreigner can witness in the islands."

South Seas beachcomber and novelist Herman Melville was one of the first to draw upon Ellis's account and spin the image of surfriding away from Protestant mores and into the realm of adventure. Outside of Polynesian lore, Melville's novel *Mardi* (1849) was the first to fictionalize surfriding and tap into the inherent drama this novel sport held for Western readers. Subsequent travel writers proliferated images of the sport that became inseparable from the island experience itself. The same year *Mardi* appeared, Henry Augustus Wise offered a vignette of "island beauties" surfriding: the water was "their native element for grace and witchery," Wise wrote, "whilst cleaving the yielding fluid with rounded limbs and streaming tresses." Mark Twain and Charles Warren Stoddard added further exotic touches to surfriding's image. Twain described "naked natives, of both sexes and all ages, amusing themselves with the national pastime of surf-bathing." Stoddard painted the surf adventures of Kahēle, who "leaped to his feet and swam in the air, another Mercury, tiptoeing a heaven-kissing hill, buoyant as vapour, and with a suggestion of invisible wings about him." These and other writers portrayed the Islands as a tropical balm for the soul, a place of romance where one lived among strong and sensuous natives who followed no laws save those of nature. In more practical terms, Hawai'i was well on its way to wearing the crown of Pacific tourism, with surfriding one of its more precious jewels. Playing its role in an enduring social irony, surfriding—along with volcanoes, canoe rides, hula dances, eating *poi*, and visits to Captain Cook's last stand at Kealakekua Bay—became a draw for Westerners anxious to experience the remnants of a society that, along with most other Pacific Island cultures in the nineteenth century, their own society had put on the road to extinction.

Hawaiian myths, legends, and histories appear in print during this period, part of the complex missionary legacy that attempted both to banish traditional Hawaiian beliefs and record them for posterity. Under the guidance of Sheldon Dibble and the Lahainaluna School on Maui, native students Samuel Mānaiakalani Kamakau, David Malo, and S. N. Hale'ole sought out native informants beginning in the 1830s and recorded the stories and beliefs that formed part of traditional Hawaiian society. Their collective efforts were published in Dibble's *Ka Moolelo Hawaii* (1838)

and also appeared in Hawaiian-language newspapers. Relying upon Kama-kau and other native informants, Abraham Fornander completed his influential *An Account of the Polynesian Race: Its Origins and Migrations* (1879) and the *Fornander Collection of Hawaiian Antiquities and Folk-Lore* (1916–1920). In 1888 King David Kalākaua and Rollin M. Daggett published their collaboration, *The Legends and Myths of Hawaii: The Fables and Folk-Lore of a Strange People*. Within these and other works surfriding took its place in a broader Polynesian culture that was communal, hierarchical, animistic—and filtered either through the language and perspective of Westerners (like Fornander and Daggett), or through their religious and educational systems (like the Lahainaluna School). We have no written history of surfriding that is wholly “Polynesian” or “Hawaiian”; rather, we read traditions that have been recorded in Western languages, or if recorded in Hawaiian, then related by native Hawaiians trained in Western schools, nearly exclusively those established by missionaries. With that caveat, the myths and legends in this anthology present a native society in which surfriding was enjoyed by the entire community and the gods, celebrated in story, practiced for competition, and governed by sacred rituals. These images have added depth and breadth to surfriding, casting it back into a distant Pacific past where it served as catalyst for the actions of lovers, chiefs, divinities, and an entire world of beings who shifted between human and divine.

Perhaps the most prevalent image of surfriding to endure throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century held that, as Mark Twain commented in 1872, “none but natives ever master the art of surf-bathing thoroughly.” We know that Westerners had tried surfriding at least as early as 1846, when scientist Chester S. Lyman visited Waikīkī and had “the pleasure of taking a surf ride towards the beach in the native style.” Toward the end of the century, in 1890, Henry Carrington Bolton was “initiated in the mysteries of surf-riding” on the island of Ni‘ihau. Bolton claimed that “for persons accustomed to bathing in the surf, the process is far less difficult than usually represented.” Visitors to this same island had apparently been enjoying surfriding with the island’s owners, the Sinclairs, ever since the 1860s, when the family had taken up the sport. And yet the belief that surfriding remained exclusively a native Hawaiian practice was generally accepted until Jack London arrived in the Islands and helped usher surfriding into the modern era of Westernized sports.

The heavy wooden board London paddled out at Waikīkī in the summer of 1907, the manner in which those around him rode waves that day (it is not clear whether London himself ever succeeded), certainly the “bull-mouthed breakers” themselves—none of these had changed sub-

stantially for the better part of a millennium. But as Hawai‘i’s political and social structures had Westernized during the nineteenth century, so followed suit its “national pastime” in the twentieth. London’s article, “Riding the South Seas Surf” (1907), transformed the image of surfriding to coincide with Western individualism and a man-conquers-nature ethos that remain central to the sport’s image today. London’s dramatic narrative is the epitome of the anti-industrialism and anti-Victorianism among Americans that Jackson Lears analyzes in *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880–1920*. London was among those who abandoned repressive Victorian values of the previous century and began to glorify “primitive” cultures and “the cult of the strenuous life” championed by President Theodore Roosevelt (1901–1909), which included an enthusiasm for sports. London wrote:

It is all very well, sitting here in the cool shade of the beach; but you are a man, one of the kingly species, and what that Kanaka can do you can do yourself. Go to. Strip off your clothes, that are a nuisance in this mellow clime. Get in and wrestle with the sea; wing your heels with the skill and power that reside in you; bit the sea’s breakers, master them, and ride upon their backs as a king should.

Pumping himself up for a surf session, London also glorified the Hawaiian as a “black Mercury”—“a man, a natural king, a member of the kingly species that has mastered matter and the brutes and lorded it over creation”—and in doing so transformed the native into a Western-style mythic hero whose “heels are winged, and in them is the swiftness of the sea.” Regal, male, heroic: London sounded the trumpet of Westernization for surfriding, promoting the sport as a means of establishing a hyper-masculine dominance over nature. With London’s seal of approval, the popularity of surfriding grew steadily in Hawai‘i and Southern California over the next half century, a period that saw sports and outdoor activities like surfriding become a way not only to demonstrate one’s masculinity but to build personal character and promote citizenship. The image of surfriding could not have been healthier when it ran head-on into California youth culture.

The most popular images of surfing today trace their origins back to the sport’s sudden launch into mainstream culture in the late 1950s and early 1960s. By that time all of the elements that fueled the launch were in place: a large youth population in Southern California relatively well-off thanks to postwar prosperity, a fast-growing car culture that allowed

easy access to surf spots along the coast, an established film industry close at hand, and a small but growing number of surf shops ready to provide the latest surfboard designs. Jack London's hyper-masculine mastery over the ocean and its waves gave way to the more frivolous world of Southern California teenagers; their dress, music, dances, language, cars, and general attitude all became irrevocably a part of surfing's image through popular novels, films, and music. The *Gidget* phenomenon, and songs by the Beach Boys and Jan and Dean, were the most iconic expressions of the sport's latest transformation.

Although low-budget surf films had been showing since the early 1950s, *Gidget* (1959) was the first film to capture surfing for a mainstream audience. Technicolor images of Southern California beaches, warm waves, and a carefree lifestyle struck a chord with audiences that has continued to amplify ever since. Kahuna, the main surf character in the film, signals a number of important trends taking place in surfing at the time. His Hawaiian name and beach shack on the shores of Southern California trace the historical link between the two surf cultures, with the latter gaining prominence after World War II. Kahuna portrays himself as a "beach bum" who lives to surf and "follow the sun"; he is antiestablishment, individualistic, strongly sexualized, and has an aura of danger about him, though he remains generally a positive figure. These basic qualities—some new, some familiar to surfing—essentially define the popular image of surfers today.

The Beach Boys had an equally strong impact on the popularity of surfing because they succeeded in associating the sport with the same idealized images used by nineteenth-century writers: romance, travel, adventure—open to all at the nearest beach. Fellow singers Jan and Dean and surf musician Dick Dale, along with a string of blockbuster *Beach Party* films that followed *Gidget*, reinforced Southern California as one big beach where young people rode waves, danced, and maneuvered more or less successfully through sexual escapades. As Hawai'i lent its exotic ambiance to nineteenth-century narratives, so Southern California in the latter half of the twentieth century became an inseparable part of surfing's new image. Mainstream advertisers soon appeared in newly formed magazines like *Surfer* (founded by John Severson in 1960) and began sponsoring surf contests to associate their products with fun in the sun. Surfing, for decades the recreation of a modest number of island enthusiasts along California's coastal fringe, suddenly transformed into a lifestyle that could be packaged and sold to middle America.

The proliferation of surfing in mainstream media created a unique figure in the history of the sport: the "surfer." *Gidget*'s Kahuna is the

archetype, based on historical figures like Tom Blake, who transplanted the Hawaiian beachboy ideal to Southern California in the late 1920s and 1930s. What *The Wild One*'s Johnny Strabler (Marlon Brando) did for motorcycle riders in the 1950s, *Gidget*'s Kahuna (Cliff Robertson) accomplished for surfers in the 1960s. Hunter S. Thompson's *Hell's Angels* outlined the phenomenon: *The Wild One* "told the story that was only beginning to happen and which was inevitably influenced by the film. It gave outlaws a lasting, romance-glazed image of themselves, a coherent reflection that only a very few had been able to find in a mirror, and it quickly became the bike rider's answer to *The Sun Also Rises*."⁹

Before Kahuna, the idea of dedicating one's life to riding waves existed for at most a small group of people. Before Kahuna, surfing was an activity people did, it wasn't who they were or how they defined themselves. Among Hawaiians, surfing belonged to part of a larger experience and relationship with the ocean. And though Polynesian traditions record the exploits of many expert surfers, the sport would not have defined them socially in the sense that one could be designated an *ali'i* (chief) or *kahuna* (priest, craftsman, teacher) or *maka'āinana* (commoner). The concept of a person's identity being entirely constituted by riding waves is a Hollywood construction. In *Gidget*, Kahuna plays a role that he himself admits is fabricated, confirmed by his destruction of the beach shack at the end of the film and his return to society as an airplane pilot. Even Kahuna was not a "surfer" (or "surf bum" in his words). And yet the image, once created, has proliferated in the popular imagination.

And this image has changed over the decades. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the surfer image established by Cliff Robertson in *Gidget* (1959) and Frankie Avalon in *Beach Party* (1963) followed the dark, leading-man looks of Elvis Presley and Marlon Brando. In the 1970s and 1980s, following surfing's integration with the drugs, long hair, and mysticism of West Coast counterculture, the surfer image shifted to figures like Jeff Spicoli (Sean Penn) in *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* (1982) and Bodhi (Patrick Swayze) in *Point Break* (1991). Despite differences in their physical appearance from Kahuna, the sandy-brained dooper (Spicoli) and the bank-robbing adrenaline junkie (Bodhi) share an important quality with their big-screen predecessor: they all live to ride waves.

The past several decades have seen a number of layers added to the image of both surfing and surfers, some of them in direct response to Hollywood fictions. In the mid-1970s, a contingent of Australians, South Africans, and Hawaiians created the first international circuit of surf contests, promoting a new "professional" side of surfing that they

hoped would provide a respectable image for the sport. Their efforts have largely succeeded—though in terms of the professional image more so abroad than in the United States—with a small percentage of surfers today earning six-figure salaries in sponsorship and prize money. The Surfrider Foundation, established in 1984, ushered in a new era of surfers acting en masse as environmentalists and social activists. In the early 1990s, surfing became linked to “extreme” sports: big-wave riders using personal water craft and towropes to pull their partners into enormous waves previously considered unridable. Tow-in surfing has altered fundamental conditions and images of surfing so radically—transforming an individual sport into a team endeavor and substituting human paddling with a gasoline-powered engine—that some surfers question whether tow-in surfing qualifies as surfing at all.

Surfing’s image received another jolt in the early 1990s, when William Finnegan published “Playing Doc’s Games” in the *New Yorker*, a two-part article describing surf life in San Francisco and Finnegan’s embattled relationship with surfing. Finnegan’s superb writing and the *New Yorker*’s cultural cachet combined to boost the sport’s prominence and provide inspiration to writers as they reformulated their ocean experiences into the language of literature. Thomas Farber’s *On Water* (1994) and Daniel Duane’s *Caught Inside: A Surfer’s Year on the California Coast* (1996) continued to plumb surfing’s depths while evoking themes similar to those of Finnegan: sounding the ultimate value of a pursuit considered “non-productive” by society even as its mastery requires an enormous investment of time and energy. The superficial image of surfing established in the late 1950s is clashing evermore with the pursuit that many writers have come to articulate as a formative part of their identities.

So surfing has a history, transmitted through images that have a history themselves and that change over time. Tracking these images through Polynesian and Western cultures allows us insight into the values and ideals of these cultures, how each culture transforms surfing based on those values and ideals, and how surfing—while transforming cultures itself—has shown an amazing ability throughout the centuries to survive, adapt, and prosper.

Surfriding and Surfing

As images of surfing have a history, so too the terms used to describe the sport. *Surfriding* has been selected for the title of Part I and throughout the early chapters of the anthology for several reasons. Mostly archaic,

the term is nevertheless useful in characterizing the general act of riding waves with a board in any position: prone, kneeling, standing, or any combination of these. Many early narratives like those from Cook's third voyage do not specify the natives actually standing on their boards (what we would call surfing today). The mariners used a variety of expressions to explain what they saw—*diversion*, *amusement*, *playing in the surf*—which could encompass any manner of riding waves. The first description that notes natives standing on surfboards occurs in James Morrison's narrative on Tahitians, witnessed sometime in the years 1788–1789. This does not mean that Hawaiians were not standing on their boards when Cook visited, only that the Westerners did not specify as much. This is the case in many descriptions throughout the nineteenth century as well, and thus *surfriding* seems to be the more appropriate term for that era.

Surfriding and *surfrider* also hold the honor of being the terms in longest continual use to describe the act of riding waves and those who ride them. The former appears for the first time apparently in Edward T. Perkins's *Na Motu: or, Reef-Rovings in the South Seas* (1854). Describing his experience in the waves on Maui with a group of “about twenty girls, of various ages, and a dozen boys,” Perkins wrote: “the art of surf-riding is not so simple as it would seem.”¹⁰ Because the verb *to surf* had not yet come into usage in the sense of “to ride waves,” Perkins wrote that he “sport[ed]” in the waves” for about fifteen minutes until he wiped out: “a roller caught me as it broke, and wrenching the board from my hands, whirled me along in every conceivable attitude; and on recovering from the shock, I was compelled to abandon my aquatic sports for the remainder of the day.” Perkins was not actually surfing in the sense we would use the word today (again, standing on a board), but rather body boarding or boogie boarding. And so *surfriding* is indeed the appropriate term in this case. Other terms in use during this period that have subsequently died out are *surfswimming*, *surf playing*, and *surf-bathing*. (This last term was used by Mark Twain.) *Surf-riding* still appears in contemporary book titles such as O. B. Patterson's *Surf-Riding: Its Thrills and Techniques* (1960), Arthur H. Klein's *Surf-Riding* (1972), and Wayne Warwick's *A Guide to Surfriding in New Zealand* (1978).

The word *surf-rider* first appears apparently in Reverend Henry T. Cheever's *Life in the Sandwich Islands: or, The Heart of the Pacific, as it Was and Is* (1851). “In this consists the strength of muscle and sleight-of-hand,” observed Cheever, “to keep the head and shoulders just ahead and clear of the great crested wall that is every moment impending over one, and threatening to bury the bold surf-rider in its watery ruin.” The term did not catch on—other period descriptions included *surf swimmer*

or *surf-board swimmer*, and *surf-bather*—until Kalākaua and Daggett published “Kelea, The Surf-Rider of Maui” in 1888, and then both *surf-rider* and *surf-riding* became the most prevalent terms. But again, the descriptions in this period are not always clear whether the surfriders are in fact standing on the surfboard. (On a side note, the earliest usage of *surf-board* appears in the diary of Ebenezer Townsend, who landed in the Hawaiian Islands aboard a sealing ship in August 1798: “They sometimes make use of surf-boards,” wrote Townsend. “The surf-board is about their own length and floats them lighter.”¹¹) *Surfrider* is still used today in such names as the Surfrider Foundation (1984) and Matt Warshaw’s *Surfriders: In Search of the Perfect Wave* (1997).

Surfing and *surfer* appear only in the twentieth century and—when the terms are used by themselves—indicate the act of standing on a surfboard, or one who stands on a surfboard. Any other positions on a board today either have different names (*kneeboarding*, *kneeboarder*; *boogie boarding*, *boogie boarder*) or are somehow qualified: *windsurfer*, *kitesurfer*, *tow-in surfer*. *Surfing* appears apparently for the first time in a *Hawaiian Gazette* article (December 8, 1905) as a translation for the Hawaiian *he‘e nalu*. A sled and small surfboard (used for surfing) thought to be nearly three hundred years old and belonging to a Hawaiian chiefess named Kaneamuna were found in a cave at Ho‘okena, Hawai‘i. Alexander Hume Ford appears to be the first to use the term *surfer* in a letter requesting support for the proposed Outrigger Canoe Club (letter dated April 7, 1908). The letter stated: “The main object of the club being to give an added and permanent attraction to Hawaii and make Waikiki always the Home of the Surfer, with perhaps an annual Surfboard and Outrigger Canoe Carnival which will do much to spread abroad the attractions of Hawaii, the only islands in the world where men and boys ride upright upon the crests of the waves.”¹² The association of “Surfer” with riding “upright on the crests of the waves” established the term as one used exclusively for those who stand on surfboards. In his later article for *Paradise of the Pacific*, “Aquatic Sports” (1908), Ford used both *surfer* and *surf-rider* (as well as *surfing*) and the names became commonly interchangeable through the 1950s. In his *California Surfriders* (1946), Doc Ball selected the terms *surfer*, *surfrider*, *surfboarder*, as well as *surfing* and *surfboarding*. Tommy Zahn used *surfboarding* in his 1954 article (see Part III) to describe what we would call paddleboarding today. Because *surfer* and *surfing* have become the dominant terms since the 1960s, and because the majority of texts in the concluding chapters refer explicitly to standing on surfboards, the terms *surfer* and *surfing* are used in reference to these texts rather than the outdated and more encompassing terms *surfrider* and *surf-riding*.

Order, Dating, and Selection of Texts

Although all of the texts in Part I were written after the first Western accounts of surfriding in Part II, the Polynesian myths, legends, chants, and proverbs open the anthology because they form part of an oral tradition that predates the Western texts. Surfriding developed most fully in Polynesia, and so it is appropriate that Polynesian texts hold this place of honor.

The texts in Part II appear chronologically from when the authors actually witnessed surfriding (when this has not been possible to determine, the year of publication is used). Part of this anthology's purpose is to track surfriding's ebb and flow through the centuries; knowing when (and if possible where) surfriding actually occurred helps to establish this continuum. The period between Hiram Bingham's departure from Hawai'i in 1840 and the revival at Waikīkī in the early twentieth century has been an especially obscure chapter in surf history. The handful of selections from these decades helps to illuminate surfriding's continued existence and thus belie such often-quoted misrepresentations of the sport as the following by G. W. Bates: "Of the numerous national games and amusements formerly practiced by the Hawaiians, surf-bathing is about the only one which has not become extinct. Lahaina is the only place on the group where it is maintained with any degree of enthusiasm, and even there it is rapidly passing out of existence" (*Sandwich Island Notes*, 1854). Down but not out, surfriding maintained its presence in the outlying regions where most Western visitors did not venture.

The remaining parts follow a roughly chronological order (with dates corresponding to year of publication) and present texts that capture the most significant trends in surf culture over the past century. Due to space limitations, many writings had to be omitted from the final version; the most important of these are referenced in the annotated bibliography.

Two main criteria determined the selection of texts: historical importance and quality of writing. Although native Polynesian views appear throughout, the majority of texts present surfriding from a Western perspective. Some accounts will complement one another; others will offer contrasting views and opinions. Such positioning allows this anthology to serve as a starting point for further inquiry into the many historical and cultural images that have surrounded surfriding. Finally, because of the enormous amount of material published about surfing since the 1960s, the choice of texts—save seminal works like *Gidget* or *The Pump House Gang*—to represent this most recent era becomes largely subjective.

Nevertheless, one could hardly hope to find a more authoritative or articulate group of voices in the latter chapters. Once again, embedded in the final selection is the hope of inspiring continued conversations about a social activity that has been the catalyst for so much reflection and debate over the centuries.

Hawaiian Spelling

Diacritical marks have been added to Hawaiian words and Hawaiian names in the editor's introductions to reflect contemporary usage. Works published before this usage became current have been reproduced in their original form.