

HUNTINGTON BEACH SURFING HISTORY

“While surfing’s culture has a world wide audience linked to Huntington Beach, Surf City’s humble beginnings evolve around a few dedicated regulars.”

1914

George Freeth (1883-1919) is recognized as the first surfer in the United States (1907). At the 1914 dedication of the new 1,350 foot long concrete pier, George demonstrated surfboarding.

Circa 1914. Huntington Beach news and program with George Freeth demonstrating surfboard Riding Saturday, June 20, 1914. Courtesy of the City



Classic HB Tradition —Shooting the Pier—Circa '60s.

1927-28

Local legends

Delbert “Bud” Higgins (later lifeguard, fire chief and historian of Huntington Beach), and Gene Belshe escalated interest in the sport. They handcarved the first surfboards from solid redwood with a block plane and drawknife.

Duke Kahanamoku surfed in HB with Bud and Gene.



1936

‘SEE CALIFORNIA’S SAFEST FAMILY BEACH’ proclaims HB’s Chamber of Commerce. Shown in its PR Brochure ‘REAL SPORTS’, “A real thrill experienced by surf board riders. Long rolling breakers make Huntington Beach an ideal spot for this thrilling sport.”

SURF CITY BEGININGS

In the early '30s and late '40s, locals were creating a lifestyle around HB surf...due to lighter Bolsa wood surfboards and the return of soldiers (who were introduced to surfing in the Pacific islands). It wasn't until 1948-59 that surfing would become an 24 hour activity--it was an era of beach parties, Gidget and woodies. In 1945, a local in Huntington Beach manufactured the first rubber wetsuit, also making surfing a 12 month sport.



Circa 1927
HB surfing pioneers, Bud Higgins and Gene Belshe posing with the first two surfboards in Huntington Beach. Courtesy of the Huntington Beach International Surfing Museum and Gloria Treece.

Circa 1936. City Brochure proclaiming Huntington Beach “California’s Finest Bathing Beach”. Courtesy of Glory Treece. 1996

The Duke

The bronze full size likeness of the Duke Paoa Kahinuinu Makoe Hulikohoa Kahanamoku is a HB landmark. The Polynesian giant and bold medal Olympic swimmer known as the Father of Modern Surfing, presided over five United States Surfing Championships in HB. The bust is currently located in the Huntington Beach International Surfing Museum.



Circa 1987.
Opening of the International Surfing Museum in Huntington Beach and future concept.

SurfBoard Shops

Gordie Duane opened HB's first surfboard shaping shop under the pier in 1956. Jack Hokanson, opened Jack's Surfboards in 1957. It was the birth of an industry.



Surf Museum

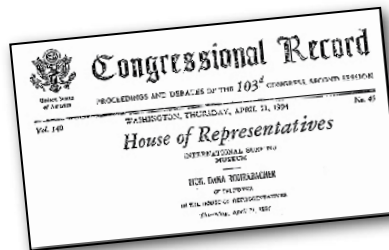
The only International Surfing Museum is located in Huntington. Since its opening in July, 1987, visitors from over 42 countries have enjoyed surfing's rich history.



DESIGN & MODEL: DON STROUT

Congressional Record

Congressman Dana Rohrabacher recognizes the Huntington Beach International Surfing Museum's exclusivity and declares Huntington Beach "Surf City, USA", on the floor of the US Congress in Washington D.C. on April 21, 1991.



Surf City Huntington Beach

September 16, 1991, the city council adopted the theme "Surf City". December 13, 1994, the City was officially registered with the United States Patent and Trademark Office as "Surf City Huntington Beach".



Circa 1994. Surfing Walk of Fame

Surfing Walk of Fame

The world's first and only Surfing Walk of Fame was dedicated May 28, 1994 with international press watching.



Circa 1960.
Long Board Surfing Contest. Courtesy of the City of Huntington Beach.



MAJOR EVENTS

Surf contests have played a key role in establishing HB as Surf City, USA.

Early West Coast Surf Contests

In 1930 there were only about 25 boards enough to merit a contest in Corona Del Mar. Three years went by before a second contest was sponsored by the Huntington Beach Life Guards in 1933.

First West Coast Surfboard Championship

was held in September of 1959. The original concept came from Peter Beltran, then student at California State College, Long Beach. The contest grew from 73 entrants in the first year to 500 plus in 1968. This single event had the greatest impact of the sports' future.

Television Recognition

SoCal station KTJ and later ABC Wide World of Sports, covered the US Championships between 1964 and 1968. In 1965, ABC won top honors for a sports film at the Cannes Film Festival.



Circa 1959-60's.

First men United States Championship contest winner - Jack Haley.

(Right) The Duke presenting Mike Dolye a contest trophy. Courtesy of the Huntington Beach Surfing Museum.



OP Pro Surf Contest

Major surf contests like the popular OP Pro, (laugural in 1982) had their beginnings in Huntington Beach. Many world titles have been won adjacent to the pier

LOCAL HEROES

Surfing Walk of Fame Criteria: Either resided 10 years in HB or graduated from the Huntington Union School District and was finalist in local or world championships. Must have made contributions to HB Surfing Culture and was Surf Pioneer in the City.



Corky Carrol -

'Best known surfer in the world' according to a Surfer Magazine poll. Corky holds the record for the most won titles in surfing and is currently a popular character spokesperson for Ocean Spray™ and Budweiser™ TV commercials.

Gordie Duane -

Gordie opened Huntington Beaches first surf shop shaper in 1956. Gordie Surfboards pioneered the use of lightweight surfboard foam.

Robert August -

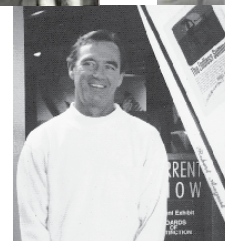
Famous for stardom in the original "Endless Summer" film by Bruce Brown, the "goofy foot" still takes to the water regularly.



CORKY



DUANE



ROBERT

SURF CULTURE LANDMARKS

*While some are know longer standing,
their legacy lives forever*

The Pier

Back in the days when swimmers were allowed to jump off the pier, surfers tallied 30 to 50 wave rides a day. The pier still serves as focal point for surfers and beach goers...and surfers still 'shoot the pier.'



CIRA 1920-1950s

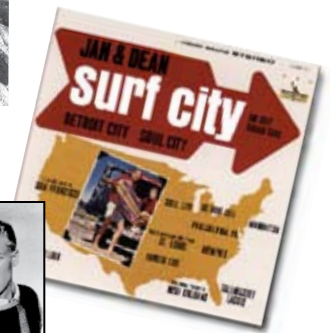
Surf Art

Surf artist, Edmond Shumpert, created the Pacific Coast Hwy. landmark statue "The Ultimate Challenge" located across the street from the Hilton. The bronze casting being one of the largest in the Nation measures 18 feet diagonally. Edmond also created the bronze bust of Duke Kahanamoku.



Surf Music

The Golden Bear on PCH rocked with the surf beats of Dick Dale and Jan and Dean. When Jan and Dean sang about "Surf City, USA" in the Sixties, it was Huntington Beach they were immortalizing!



The Last Surf Theatre

Constructed in 1922, during the '60s, local and exotic surfing footage from around the world was shown 24 hours a day. It was the first theater to have daylong showings, with full-length surf features like "Pacific Vibrations" and "5 Summer Stories."



Huntington Beach International Surfing Museum

The 1932 restored art deco building was the first hospital in HB.



Surfing Walk of Fame

The world's first and only Surfing Walk of Fame is located at the corner of Jack's Surfboards, one of the most popular and long standing shops since 1957.

CREDITS
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