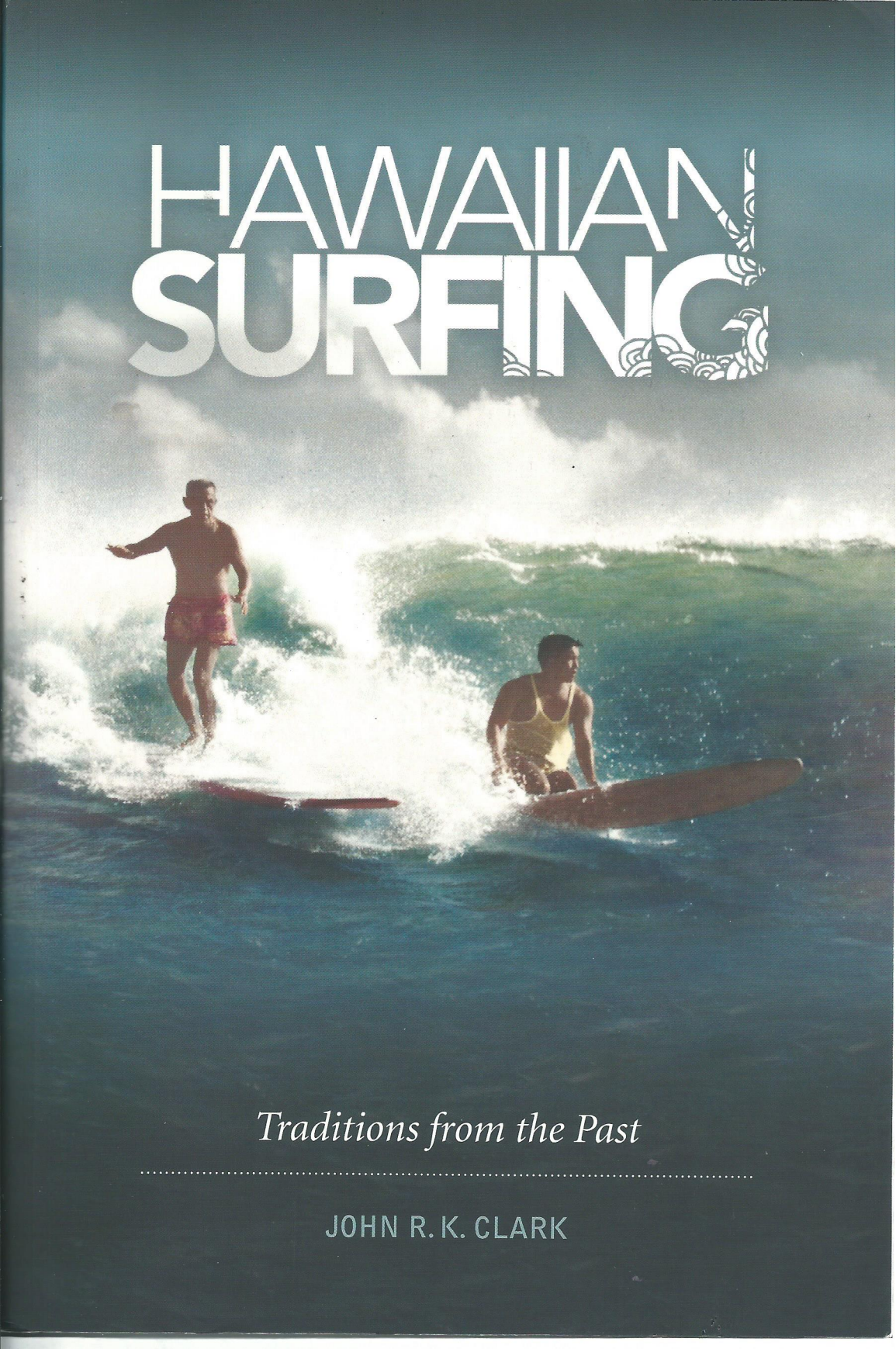


HAWAIIAN SURFING



Traditions from the Past

JOHN R. K. CLARK

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**UNIVERSITY OF
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HONOLULU

Photo on title page: Kimo Hollinger and Eddie Aikau, two legendary Hawaiian surfers, caught a wave together circa 1970 at Waimea Bay on O'ahu's North Shore. Traditional Hawaiian surfers enjoyed riding the same wave with other surfers and encouraged others to take off with them. PHOTO BY DON JAMES

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prevail condition that he had. When he became paralyzed, he died in the sea. It was thought earlier that the cause of his death was surfing. This boy hailed from Honouliuli and came here to Lahaina to work. His work was not yet done before he had left. We were conducting services on these days, and on the fifth day of worship is when he died. He left at two o'clock and at four-thirty he was found dead.

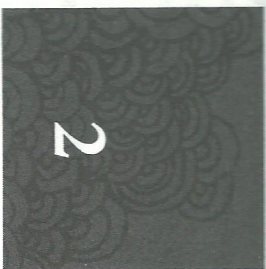
This is my advice regarding the victim. We all see throughout the islands, dear readers, that surfing is deadly. Let us remember the words of the Lord when he said, "Go and sin no more." We have just seen the immoral side of surfing. It is the reason people become indolent and the root of lasciviousness. What are we to think of this senseless death? Is it not possible to quit surfing? Pay attention, all of you who are striving to do good as well as the school children throughout the islands. Do not be stubborn. Allow room for virtue. By Kalihī'āunokū.

[The Hawaiian term *lōlō* means "paralysis," either temporary or permanent or perhaps an epileptic seizure, but it also means "stupidity." The term may also be describing the bad judgment of the victim.]

Eia kōu mea i manao ai, he hewa ka heenalu; i ka poi ana mai o ka nalu o Kaea i Ohikiolo nei, hele nui mai na kanaka i ka heenalu, o ka noho no ia a hala ka wa pono o ka hana wehewe.

—*Ka Nomanona*, FEB 15, 1842, p. 82.

This is what I thought: Surfing is wrong. When the waves break at Kaea here in Ohikiolo, many people flock here to surf. They stay until the time for gardening has passed.



Traditional Hawaiian Surf Sports

HAWAIIANS PRACTICED SIX different traditional surf sports: *he'e nalu*, or board surfing; *pūkākā nalu*, or outrigger canoe surfing; *kaha nalu*, or body-surfing; *pae po'o*, or bodyboarding; *he'e one*, or sand sliding; and *he'e pue wai*, or river surfing. While the four noted Hawaiian scholars of the 1800s—John Papa 'Ū, Samuel Kamakau, Zephrin Kepelino, and David Malo—focused primarily on board surfing, each of the six surf sports was just as much a part of the surf culture as any other.

He'e Nalu, Board Surfing

No other sport practiced by Hawaiians so completely captivated non-Hawaiians as surfing. In his anthology *Pacific Passages*, Patrick Moser identifies all the earliest descriptions of the sport by the first Europeans in Hawai'i and summarizes their reactions this way: "Fear and horror, astonishment and admiration: these were the contradictory responses associated with the first Western descriptions of surfing."

Captain James Cook arrived in Hawai'i in 1778, left the islands, and then returned to the island of Hawai'i in 1779. There he and his men became the first Westerners to witness and document traditional surfing in Hawai'i when they spotted surfers in Kealahou Bay and recorded their activities.

Twenty or thirty of the natives, each taking a long narrow board, rounded at the ends, set out together from the shore. The first wave they meet they plunge under, and suffering it to roll over them, rise again beyond it, and make the best of their way by swimming out into sea. The second wave is encountered in the same manner as the first; the great difficulty is in seizing the proper moment of diving underneath it, which, if missed, the person is caught by the surf and driven back again with

great violence, and all his dexterity is then required to prevent himself being dashed against the rocks.

As soon as they have made their way out by these repeated efforts and arrived at the smooth water beyond the surf, they lay themselves at length on their boards and prepare for their return. As the surf consists of a number of waves, of which every third is remarked to be always much larger than the others, and to flow higher on the shore . . . their first object is to place themselves on the summit of the largest surge, by which they are driven along with amazing speed toward the shore.

—Cook. *A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean*. VOL. 3. PP. 145–147.

In 1822, Christian missionary William Ellis described a similar surf session on the island of Hawai'i at Waimanu Valley in Kohala.

Each individual takes his board, and, while pushing it before him, swims perhaps a quarter of a mile or more out to sea. They do not attempt to go over the billows which roll towards the shore, but watch their approach, and dive under water, allowing the billow to pass over their heads.

When they reach the outside of the rocks where the first waves break, they adjust themselves on one end of the board lying flat on their bellies and watch the approach of the largest wave; they then poise themselves on its highest point and paddle with their hands and feet, they ride the crest of the wave in the midst of the spray and foam until within a yard or two of the rocks or shore; and when the observers expect to see them dashed to pieces, they steer with great dexterity between the rocks or slide off their board in a moment, grab it by the middle, and dive under the water while the wave rolls on and breaks among the rocks with a roaring noise, the effect of which is greatly heightened by the shouts and laughter of the natives in the water.

—Ellis. *Journal*. PP. 266–267.

The early accounts by Cook and Ellis tell us several things about traditional surfing. First and probably the most overlooked aspect of the sport, is that Hawaiians swam their boards out to the lineup, using the same technique as swimmers today who swim with kickboards in a pool. Hawaiian surfers held on to the backs of their boards and kicked out to sea with the boards extended in front of them. This is the reason many accounts of surfing in the Hawaiian language use the verb “*au*,” or swim, to describe surfers heading out to the lineup.

The boards most Hawaiians used were thin *alaia* boards that did not easily support the weight of most surfers for calm water paddling, so swimming boards out to the lineup was a common practice. Surfing is a physically demanding activity, but having to swim your board back out after every ride without swim fins would have made it even more demanding. According to all the early accounts, Hawaiians would surf for hours on end, so it is no wonder they were not only excellent surfers, but exceptional swimmers.

Mae Iho ia lakou a ao ia po, olelo aku o Kamalalawalu ia Lonoikamakahiki: "E au kakou i ka heenalu." Ae mai ia o Lonoikamakahiki. Au aku ia lakou a ma waho o

Keawiki, heenalu Iho ia, a kupono ka la i ka lolo (ota ka ahuaawaka), hol aku ia lakou i aka, auaa ka wai a pau, kauii ka malo pulu, hol aku ia a ka hale, noho Iho ia.

—Foreman. *Collection*. VOL. V. PART II. P. 437.

They slept until the next day and then Kamalalawalu said to Lonoikamakahiki: “Let’s swim out and surf!” Lonoikamakahiki agreed. They swam out and, reaching the outside of Keawiki, they began surfing. And when the sun was directly overhead at midday, they returned to shore, bathed in fresh water, then spread out the wet loam cloth to dry and repaired to the house and there they remained.

—P. 436.

I ka loa ana mai nua o ka papa ia Pikoikakalala, koi nei au aku la no ia a hiki i ke kulana heenalu a kamaka e lana ana.

—Ka Nūpepa Kūkoā. DEC 30, 1865. P. 3.

When Pikoikakalala got the board, he took off and swam [the board] out to the lineup where other surfers were waiting for waves.

Cook and Ellis noted that Hawaiian surfers paddled when they were trying to catch a wave, so paddling prone on the smaller *alaia* boards was possible but was usually done on the takeoff. Hawaiians, however, were able to paddle another type of board in calm water and on takeoffs, the long and buoyant *papa olo*, but these boards were not as common and were usually owned by the chiefs. On occasion, instead of swimming their boards, Hawaiians used canoes to ferry surfers and their boards out to the lineup, which was called *holo ma ka wā*.

Ua alohia nua, i ko laua wa o ka au ana o ka holo ana puha ma ka waa a hiki i ke kulana nalu.

—Ka Nūpepa Kūkoā. MAY 14, 1870. P. 4.

As the story goes, Kaahunānu and Kekākau swam or went by canoe to the spot where the surf rose.

—‘Ii. *Fragments*. P. 134.

The Cook and Ellis accounts describe Hawaiians diving with their boards under incoming waves, and there were several ways this was done. For short boards, one method was to get on the board and push the nose underwater, a technique surfers today call “duck diving.” Another was to turn the board on one of its rails and slice the board under the wave, a technique *puhu* riders still use today. For longer boards, one method in small surf was to slide off the board, lift the tail out of the water, and push the nose under the wave, while another method in bigger surf was to slide off the board, grab the nose, hold tight, and let the wave pass overhead.

Ellis described a technique for pulling out of a wave at the end of a ride, in which the rider would slide off the board, grab it, and dive with it under the wave. With the introduction of foam surfboards in the 1950s, surfers in Hawai'i developed a modified version of this traditional pullout. When a small wave was about to close out, they would run up to the nose, crouch down, and use their weight on the nose to lift the tail of the board out of the water. As the tail of the board swung out, they pushed the nose into the face

of the wave, ending the ride. California surfers who saw Hawaiian surfers using this technique called it an "island pull-out."

TYPES OF SURFBOARDS

Hawaiian surfers rode at least four types of *papa he'e nalu*, or surfboards: *papa olo*, *papa kiko'o*, *papa alala*, and *papa li'i'i'i*. *Papa olo* were narrow, thick, heavy boards that were rounded on the top and bottom and ranged from fourteen to sixteen feet long. *Papa kiko'o* were similar to an *olo*, but were not as thick. They were rounded on the bottom, flat on the deck, and were nine to sixteen feet long. *Papa alala*, the most commonly used boards, were much thinner, lighter, shorter, and wider, ranging from six to nine feet long. The smallest boards, those less than six feet long, were generically called *papa li'i'i'i*. Lorin Andrews, in *A Dictionary of the Hawaiian Language*, first published in 1865, called them *papa he'e nalu li'i'i'i*, literally "small surfboards," and scholar John Papa ʻĪi, writing in 1870, referred to them as *papa li'i'i'i*, literally "small boards." During the 1900s, however, Hawaiian surfers in Waikiki began calling *papa li'i'i'i pae pōo* or *pae pō boards*, which led to their common name today, *paipo boards*.

The description of traditional boards that follows was written by Peter Buck, the director at the Bishop Museum from 1936 to 1951. Buck, who was from New Zealand, used his Māori name, Te Rangī Hiroa, as his pen name.

The Bishop Museum collection consists of 25 boards ranging from a child's board of breadfruit wood, 34.25 inches long, weighing 2 pounds 10 ounces to a modern redwood board 17 feet 2 inches long, weighing 174 pounds.

The *alala* boards evidently ranged from 6 to 9 feet. A fair specimen (293) is one collected by J.S. Emerson in Kailua, Hawai'i, in 1885 (fig. 253, a). It is 6.5 feet long, 0.6 inch thick, and weight 11 pounds. The fore end is curved convexly, the aft end cut off square. The widest part near the fore end is 14.75 inches and the narrower, aft end, is 10.75 inches. The wood is *koa*.

The long *olo* type (fig. 253, b) is represented by the two boards which belonged to the high chief Pākī, who was an expert surfer. These boards had been covered at different times with three coats of paint which were removed by Tom Blake for the museum. As Pākī died in 1855, they were probably used by him as early as 1830, so they give an authentic pattern for the old time *olo* boards. One board (297) is 14.5 feet long, is 5.75 inches thick in the middle, and weight 148 pounds. The second board (298) is 15.7 feet long, is 6.25 inches thick, and weight 160 pounds. The maximum fore width is 18 inches and the narrower aft end is 11.5 inches. Both boards are made of *koa* wood which raises the question of the difficulty of procuring *wili-wili* trees of sufficient size to make the large *olo* boards. But doubtless a few were made, and such were the property of the chiefs. Thick *olo* boards were thinned off toward the rounded edges to about 0.5 inch in thickness.

—Hiroa. *Arts and Crafts*, p. 384–385.

The entries that follow are from John Papa ʻĪi. Although he says there are three kinds of surfboards, he also identifies a fourth group of boards, *papa li'i'i'i*, or "small boards."

He ekehu ano papa heenalu.

O ka olo, oia ka papa ihuhalala o waena a hui ma na niao, a he kapono hoi ia papa no ka nalu hai opuu, aale hoi e kapono i ka nalu hahale a poi hoi.

O ka olo hoi, i ka wa kielele ae o ka nalu e pae ana, he mea o ia nua ka olo ke ole e hookeunihii ia oia i ka wa e kielele ana ka nalu, a oia wale no ka mea e palema ai a hiki i ka pae ana iuka. He mau loina no hoi no keia mau mea a pau i ka wa e pae ai i ka nalu.

—Ka Nūpepa Kuokoa, MAY 28, 1870, p. 4.

Here are three kinds of surfboards.

The *olo* is thick in the middle and grows thinner toward the edges. It is a good board for a wave that swells and rushes shoreward but not for a wave that rises up high and curls over.

If it is not moved sideways when the wave rises high, it is tossed upward as it moves shoreward. There are rules to be observed when riding on a surf.

—ʻĪi, *Pragments*, p. 135.

Papa olo were long and heavy, so they had to be angled on the takeoff, or "moved sideways." If they were not, they would dive straight down and shoot back up into the air as if they were "tossed upward." For this reason surfers on *papa olo* tried to catch the same waves as canoe surfers, *ōhū*, or waves that were building and had not broken, and once a wave broke, they tried to stay on the shoulder, away from the whitewater.

The passages that follow offer descriptions of *papa kiko'o* and *papa alala* and also mention *papa li'i'i'i*.

O ka kiko'o, oia ka papa i hiki aku i ka 12 a 18 hoi kapuai ka lohi, a he papa kupono loa ia no ka nalu hai kakala. A oia ano papa heenalu, a ua maikai no hoi ia ano papa ke pae mai i ke nalu, a he papa oolea nae, a he makuu ia e na hoo heenalu e ae ke pae maa mai ia pano ka mea, ua oi aku kona lohi i ko ka papa alala. Ima e pae mai keia papa, aale no i kana mai ua mea he holo tioko o na hahale nalu e aae poi hio ana ika, a ua hiki i ka hoi ana i na hahale ana a pau a ka nalu e hele ana ma kahi a ua papa ia e holo ana, a kahi e haelele ai ia mea, a pae wale iuka i ka paena.

—Ka Nūpepa Kuokoa, MAY 28, 1870, p. 4.

The *kiko'o* reaches a length of 12 to 18 feet and is good for surf that breaks roughly. This board is good for surfing, but it is hard to handle. Other surfers are afraid of it because of its length and its great speed on a high wave that is about to curl over. It can ride on all the risings of the waves in its way until they subside and the board reaches shore.

—ʻĪi, *Pragments*, p. 135.

O ka papa alala hoi, he 9 kapuai kona loa, a ua lahihi ia ano papa. O keia papa nae, he nui ma ke pōo, a he ano mio hoi mahope. A ua ike ia, he hohoholu keia papa ke ape mai i ka nalu kakala, e holo ana ma ka opu a ma ka umama a me na lima e kuu pahala a pupuu ana paha na manamana lima i ka wa e pae ai o ka holo ana me ka hualua ilalo ka mea e loa ole ai i ke hahale o ka nalu i ka wa e poi iho ai.

—Ka Nūpepa Kuokoa, MAY 28, 1870, p. 4.

The *alala* board, which is 9 feet long, is thin and wide in front, tapering toward the back. On a rough wave, this board vibrates against the rider's abdomen, chest, or

hands when they rest flat on it, or when fingers are gripped into a fist at the time of landing. Because it tends to go downward and cut through a wave it does not rise up with the wave as it begins to curl over.

—'Yi Fragments, p. 135

*He maku wale lakou i keia ana papa, a o ka noho ana wia a me kekahi ano papa
hiki e ae ka lakou e hee ai.*

—*Ka Nuipepa Kuokoa*, MAY 28, 1870, p. 4.

The unskilled are afraid of this board [the *alania*], choosing rather to sit on a canoe or to surf on even smaller boards.

—'Yi Fragments, p. 135

In 1965, Duke Kahanamoku described one of his *papa olo* and offered his thoughts on the foam boards that replaced wooden boards.

Duke, these foam boards that are ridden today are quite a bit different from the big, heavy solid wood boards of your day. What do you think of that?

This board of mine, which I have today, is 16 feet long, 22 inches wide, and 3 1/2 inches thick. It's solid redwood. You speak about these light boards. The first (light) board I tackled was Peter Lawford's board when Peter first came to Honolulu and he brought this board and we swapped boards right out there at Canoes surf. I took one wave and it was kinda tricky as you know. I thought, "Well, I'd better stick to my own solid board, which is steadier and easier to manage." Well, I said to Peter, "You better give me my board and you take your board back." And that [was] the swap and that's the last time I ever rode on one of these tricky boards."

—Duke Kahanamoku in *Surfer* magazine, MAR 1965, p. 18.

In the *Hawaiian Dictionary*, Pukui and Elbert list other names for types of surfboards: *kioe*, *omo*, *ōnini*, *ōwili*, *paha*, and *pu'ua*. A *kioe* is a "small surfboard"; an *omo* is "the same as an *alania*, type of surfboard"; an *ōnini* is "a kind of surfboard, difficult to manage, used by experts"; an *ōwili* is a "surfboard of *wiliwili* wood"; a *paha* is "a kind of surfboard"; and a *pu'ua* is "a surfboard." The authors apparently found these names in their research, but discovered no additional information about them.

In *A Dictionary of the Hawaiian Language*, Lorin Andrews included several of these names for boards, but his definitions are also only general descriptions. A *kioe* is "the name of a small surf-board; *he papa heenalu hiihii*"; an *ōnini* is "a kind of surf-board"; an *ōwili* is the "name of a very thick surf-board made of *wiliwili*"; and a *paha* is "a surf-board; *he papa heenalu*."

SURFBOARD CONSTRUCTION

The construction of traditional surfboards has been described by many surf historians, with most accounts based on an article in the *Hawaiian Almanac and Annual for 1896*. The annual's editor, Thomas Thrum, identified his informant for the article only as "a native of the Kona district of Hawaii, familiar with the subject" and thanked M. K. Nakulua for his assistance in

translating the written account of the Kona surfer. The article includes the following:

Upon selection of a suitable tree, a red fish called *kumu* was first procured, which was placed at its trunk. The tree was then cut down, after which a hole was dug at its root and the fish placed therein, with a prayer, as an offering in payment therefore. After this ceremony was performed, then the tree trunk was chipped away from each side until reduced to a board approximately of the dimensions desired, when it was pulled down to the beach and placed in the *halau* (canoe house) or other suitable place convenient for its finishing work.

Before using the board there were other rites or ceremonies to be performed, for its dedication. As before, these were disregarded by the common people, but among those who followed the making of surf boards as a trade, they were religiously observed.

—Thrum, *Hawaiian Almanac and Annual for 1896*, p. 108.

Kamakau identified "those who followed the making of surf boards as a trade" as *kahuna kālai papa alania he'e nalu*, the "skilled craftsmen who specialize in making *alania* surfboards," especially boards for surfers of royal rank.

A hoenoho aku la no hoi oia i na kahuna kālai waa; waa kauhā, waa peleleu, waa kauhā, waa kiāloa a me na kahuna kālai papa alania heenalu a heeholu.

—*Ka Nuipepa Kuokoa*, JUNE 15, 1867, p. 1.

He [Kamehameha] chose *kahunas* who were makers of double canoes (*wāa kauhā*), war canoes (*wāa peleleu*), single canoes (*wāa kauhā*), sailing canoes (*wāa kiāloa*)—either one-masted canoes (*kiakahi*) or two-masted (*kiāloa*); and *kahunas* who were makers of *hōiua* sleds and surf boards (*papa he'e nalu*).

—Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs*, p. 176.

The entry that follows appeared in 1865 in the Hawaiian-language newspaper *Ka Nuipepa Kuokoa*. The writer, J. Waiamanu, identifies several varieties of wood that were used for boards and offers a brief explanation of the shaping and finishing process. Two of the woods that Waiamanu mentions are *kukui* and *ōhe*, neither of which are identified by other Hawaiian scholars, the usual woods mentioned being *wiliwili*, *koa*, and *ulu*. Both *kukui* and *ōhe*, which is also known as *ōhe'ōhe*, grow large enough to produce tree trunks that could be shaped into surfboards. While the name *ōhe* is best known as the common name for bamboo, the native trees are *ōhe* (*Tetradiplazandra* spp.) and *ōhe ma kai* (*Reynoldsia sandwicensis*). They grow over thirty feet tall, and large specimens are still found on the islands of Hawai'i, Maui, and Kaua'i.

O ka heenalu, oia kekahi paani nui loa o Hawaii nei, mai nai'hi a na makaimaiana. Penei nāe hoi ka hana ana o keia hana: Ua hoōmakaukaue ia ka papa manua, oia hoi ke kōa, ke kukui, ke ōhe, ka wiliwili, a me kekahi mau laau e ae no i kapono no ka hana ana i papa. I ka hana nua ana nāe hoi, oia no hoi ke kālai ana i ka wā hou o ka hāu, a pūu hoi ia, wāhio hou aku a māloa, alala, hana hou a māka'i loa, me ka paele

ana i ka mea eleele, a wahi hoi i ke kupa a pua, a kauna ma kahli kupono; a hiki mai
hoi ka wa e lelela ai i ka heenalu, o ka hele no ia i ka heenalu.

—Ka Nūpepa Kiokoa. DEC 23, 1865. P. 1.

Surfing is a very popular sport in Hawai'i from the chiefs to the commoners. This is how you do it. The board is created ahead of time out of koa, kukui, 'ohu, wilwilii, or other woods that are good for making boards. The first task is to carve it out while the wood is still fresh, and when that is done, you leave the board to dry. Then it is worked on even more until it is finished off with black stain and wrapped tightly in *kapa* and placed somewhere appropriate until the time comes to enjoy the surf. That is when it is taken out surfing.

In 1812, when John Papa 'Ūi was a child of twelve, he went from Honolulu to Lahaina on a sailing ship. Years later, in 1870, he described this adventure and told of children in Lahaina, or Lele as it was known then, playing with *hā ma'i'a*, banana stumps, using them as small surfboards.

*Kamihao ka nana ana ma o a maani, a me ka ulu Ulu a ulu Niu o Lele, e hooihaha
mai ana, mai kela a keia pea mai; aia hoi na keiki e heenalu ana ma ka aooa akau o
Pelekane, me na hamaia, oia ko lakou papa heenalu. A oiai e makaikai ana ua keiki
nei ia lakou la e hooihaha mai ana ia hana, e like me na kanaka makua, mawaho
ae o Ulo.*

—Ka Nūpepa Kiokoa. FEB 5, 1870. P. 1.

It was wonderful to see the breadfruit and coconut groves of Lele, thriving from one end to the other. Boys were surfing on the north side of Pelekane, with banana trunks for surfboards, and I watched with delight. Adults were surfing outside at Ulo.

—'Ūi, *Fragments*. P. 109.

The last two passages about traditional surfboard construction are from William Ellis, who made his observations in 1822, and from Peter Buck, or Te Rangī Hiroa, the director of the Bishop Museum from 1936 to 1951.

On occasions [when they go surfboarding], they use a board, which they call a *papa he nana*, (wave sliding-board), generally five or six feet long, and rather more than a foot wide, sometime flat, but more frequently slightly convex on both sides. It is usually made from the wood of the *erythrina*, stained, quite black, and prepared with great care. After using, it is placed in the sun till perfectly dry, when it is rubbed over with cocoa-nut oil, frequently wrapped in cloth, and suspended in some part of their dwelling.

—Ellis, *Journal*. P. 266.

The old boards were dubbed out with stone adzes from a section of tree trunk of the required diameter. They were then rubbed down with rough coral to remove the adz marks and polished with *tōhi* stone rubbers, much as canoe hulls were smoothed. They were stained a dark color with the root of the *ti* plant (*mole ki*) or the juice from pounded *kukui* bark (*hili*). Sometimes the soot of burned *kukui* nuts was used, and Blake (1935, p. 45) quotes a record of a *wilwilii* board being buried in mud near a spring. The juice from banana buds and charcoal from burnt pandanus leaves are

also recorded as stains. When the stain was dry, a dressing of *kukui* oil was applied as the finishing process.

—Hiroa, *Arts and Crafts*, P. 385.

While information on the construction of traditional surfboards has survived, including details on what the boards were made of and how they were made, the "rites and ceremonies," as Thurun called them, that accompanied the entire process were apparently never recorded.

During the 1800s, Hawaiians began making surfboards out of trees that were introduced to Hawai'i, such as mango. One of the areas where mango trees flourished was the district of Puna on the island of Hawai'i, and once the trees were established, surfers in Kaimū and Kalapana made boards from the wood. This tradition continued into the early 1900s.

[In Kalapana in the 1930s] we had lots of mango trees: cigar mangoes, Filipino mangoes, rose apple mangoes, and common mangoes. Our surfboard was about nine feet long, and it was made out of mango wood. My dad called it a *papa he'i*.

—William Kaina. DEC 21, 2009.

The residents of Kaimū and Kalapana were surfers. The old timers had big boards, some of them made out of *koa*, but there wasn't any *koa* in Puna, so they made boards out of mango and even monkeypod. They made smaller boards from *ulu*, if one of the trees happened to fall. The kids also used their mothers' ironing boards, which were made out of wood and shaped like small surfboards.

—Edward Bumatay. DEC 24, 2009.

Generic names for parts of a surfboard are found in the passage below and in the Hawaiian surfing dictionary that follows this section.

Ienu is the back of a board. The front is the *ihu*. *ʻĀoio* is the side, *luna* is the top, and *lalo* is the bottom.

—Kawika Kapahulehua. MAR 14, 2007.

Traditional Hawaiian surfers named their boards, a practice that reappeared with the revival of surfing in Waikīki during the early 1900s. Photos from that period show the popularity of writing names across the top of many boards, but for most surfers, the tradition of naming boards died in the 1950s with the introduction of foam boards.

[On Ni'ihau] all boards had names and pictures painted on them, each associated with certain riders and certain families. In fact, a song containing all the names of the boards was composed and is sung as part of the [annual surfing] celebration. As the verse is sung in which the name of a certain board is mentioned, all family members related to the board or its riders, little children with charge as well as adults, are expected to come forward and donate money to the common fund which is used to put on next year's *pā'ihā*. The song would be sung continuously until an appropriate sum had been raised.

—Andrade, *Pae I Ke Ohe*, P. 9.

The era of the wooden surfboard began to fade in the 1950s with the introduction of foam boards from California. Foam boards were light, easy to ride, and inexpensive, which was especially appealing to young surfers. When entrepreneurs in California started mass-producing foam boards, the transition from wood to foam was off and running. Foam boards showed up in local stores like Longs, Woolworths, and Sears. They proved to be perfect for beginners, so the beach concessions in Waikiki began using them for lessons and rentals as early as 1954. Surfing legend George Downing was running the Outrigger Beach Service in 1957, and he ordered one hundred pink foam boards to use as rental boards. Downing and Wally Froiseth were among the first in Hawaii to experiment with making their own foam blanks in a mold at Froiseth's home in Kaimuki. In 1958, Bob Shepherd and Joe Daniels started making foam boards in a small warehouse in Kaka'ako. They called them Swimm Boats (with a double "m") when an elderly neighbor asked them what they were making and then said, after hearing the explanation, "That's a swim boat." Foam boards were making their way into Hawaiian surfing.

The end of the wooden board era came in the 1960s. California surfer Dale Velyu opened the first large-scale foam surfboard factory in Hawaii in 1960. He hired Terry Woodall as the manager and Richard Deese, Gilbert "Soyu" Kawamoto, Raymond Patterson, and Kenny Tilton as his production crew. They worked out of a warehouse on Cooke Street in Kaka'ako, selling boards as fast as they could make them. The huge demand for foam boards led to the first retail surf shops in Hawaii, such as the Inter-Island Surf Shop on Kaka'ako Street, Island Surfboards on Dudoit Lane, Alii Surfboards on Hōpaka Street, Surfline Hawaii on Pi'ikoi Street, and Surfboards Hawaii in Hale'iwa. The first mainland surf shop in Hawaii, Hobie Surfboards, opened in 1961 when Hobie Alter, from Dana Point, California, rented a shop on Kap'olani Boulevard near Pi'ikoi Street and hired Dick Metz as his manager. By the mid-1960s, foam boards dominated the surfing world and wooden boards had disappeared from the lineup.

SURFING SKILLS AND STYLES

Surfing skills include everything a surfer does on a surfboard from paddling out to the lineup, pushing through incoming sets, catching waves and riding them, and finally returning to shore. But as every surfer knows, mastering the physical skills of the sport is only half the challenge. The other half is learning how to read the ocean and read the waves. The best surfers are those who excel at both.

Surfing styles, the way people surf, are as different as surfers themselves, and everyone has his or her own unique style, with no two surfers ever surfing exactly alike. But like any other sport, there are certain skills, stances, and maneuvers in surfing that surfers regard as better than others. The first surfer to write a book describing the skills and styles of Hawaiian surfing was Tom Blake, whose work *Hawaiian Surfboard* was published in 1935. Reprinted in 1983 as *Hawaiian Surfers 1935*, Blake's book, and especially his final chapter, is still one of the most detailed sources of information on the skills and knowledge that were needed to ride the old-style wooden boards.

The summary of traditional surfing skills that follows is from *Arts and Crafts of Hawaii*, by Peter Buck, or Te Rangī Hiroa.

Surfboards were used throughout the islands on parts of the coast where waves were high and had a long roll before breaking. The short *alaia* boards could be used at most times on waves close in to the shore, but the long *alo* boards required high waves to prevent them from digging into the surface instead of riding freely on the forward slope. The *alo* riders lay on their boards and paddled them with the hands, avoiding breaks in the waves, until they got well behind the line of breakers. There they waited for suitable waves, which came in series. Still paddling, with the board directed toward shore, they usually let the first two waves pass and selected the third or fourth. As the board rose on the front surface of the selected wave, they paddled to keep in position and, all going well, the wave carried them along on its front surface. The rider could remain in the prone position termed *kīpapa*, but experts were not content with this. By holding firmly to the sides of the board, the body could be drawn into the kneeling position, or by carrying the legs forward, a sitting position could be assumed. By straightening up from the kneeling position, the body was carried to the final, erect position. The board could be directed into a slide to the right or left by leaning the weight to that side or trailing the foot in the water to act as a rudder. With the rider erect, the board continued forward on the front surface of the wave. The slide to right or left was not only exhilarating but it was used to get out of the way if the wave started to break behind the board. Perfect balance despite the changing directions of the board marked the expert surfer.

—Hiroa, *Arts and Crafts*, p. 385.

Hiroa's description identifies four basic riding positions that traditional Hawaiian surfers used: prone (*kīpapa*), sitting (*noho*), kneeling (*kukuli*), and standing (*ka*), the same positions that are found in the sketches of surfing by early explorers and travelers. A fifth position, known today as the drop-knee style with one knee up and one down (*ho'ōkahi kuli*), also appears in some of the early sketches of surfing.

ʻO ko lakou nei hele nō ia, a waiho mācākā ʻo uka o Hāhena, ua ʻike maia nā kānaka i kaia poʻe ʻekolu e ka aku ana i luna o ke kākala o ka nahi.

—Nogelmeier, *Ka Mōʻōlelo*, p. 235.

They continued on until the uplands of Hāhena lay clearly before them and its population saw these three people standing in the curl of the wave.

—Nogelmeier, *The Epic Tale*, p. 222.

Of all the positions, riding prone was the most common, offering the most board control and the best chance for hanging onto a board in the whitewater, but early writers, such as William Ellis, noted that surfers also changed their positions as they rode a wave.

Those who are expert frequently change their position on the board, sometimes sitting and sometimes standing erect in the midst of the foam.

—Ellis, *Journal*, pp. 266–267.

In the two passages that follow, one by Nathaniel Emerson and one by

John Papa 'Ū, the writers describe the traditional style of riding prone: lying on your stomach and your chest with your hands extended (*pahola*), resting flat and drawn together (*pupu'ū*). This streamlined prone position is usually seen today only when surfers lay down at the end of their last wave of the day and try to ride as far in toward the beach as possible.

While the usual attitude was that of reclining on the board face downwards with one or both arms folded and supporting the chest, such dexterity was attained by some that they could maintain their balance while sitting or even while standing erect as the board was borne along at the full speed of the inrolling breaker.

—Malo, *Hawaiian Antiquities*, p. 223. From a footnote written in 1898 by the translator Nathaniel Emerson.

A ua ike ia, he hohihohu keia papa ke ape mai i ka nalu kakala, e holo ana ka opu a ma ka umama a me na lima e kau pahola a pupuu ana paha na mamama lima i ka wa e pae ai.

—*Ka Nuipepa Kiokoa*, MAY 28, 1870, p. 4.
On a rough wave this board [the *alaia*] vibrates against the rider's abdomen, chest, or hands when they rest flat on it, or when fingers are gripped into a fist at the time of landing.

—'Ū, *Fragments*, p. 135.

Riding a long, heavy, wooden *papa olo* on a big wave was possible only by taking off on the shoulder and sliding immediately to stay out in front of the whitewater. Traditional surfers angled their boards on a takeoff and then, if they were going to stand, stood up only when they were moving in the direction they were going to slide, either to the left or right. When light, maneuverable foam longboards with fins arrived in the mid-1950s, surfers were able to make vertical takeoffs and bottom turns in the steepest parts of a wave. In 1965, Duke Kahanamoku commented on this change from traditional surfing.

You speak of [big waves at] Makaha. Makaha we used to ride them, but we never were riding the board like the boys are doing today. These chaps are catching waves right in the middle of the doggone breaks. And then they go straight down and they get mixed up with the foam. But what we used to do in those days was we used to sit close to the edge and every time we caught the wave, we'd slide off without having to get mixed up with the foam. And that's how we used to ride it—either to the right or left.

—*Surfer*, MAR 1965, p. 19.

In addition to riding prone and standing, traditional surfers also rode sitting and kneeling. There were practical reasons for assuming these positions, such as riding through the whitewater of a breaking wave. Traditional boards did not have fins and sidestepped easily. Sitting or kneeling lowered the center of gravity and allowed the rider to hold the rails, minimizing the chance of a wipeout. Sitting or kneeling made it easier to get through flat spots on a wave, places where waves die out and reform as they pass over the deeper areas of the ocean floor. In the October 1936 issue of *Paradise of the*

Pacific magazine, Tom Blake described a one-mile ride he had in June of the same year from the famous deepwater surfing spot Castle's to Walkiki Beach. Several times during this ride he had to drop to his knees to ride through flat spots on the wave. In the two passages that follow Blake's account, Carlos Andrade describes surfers on Ni'ihau performing similar maneuvers in similar situations.

Good fortune was with me from the start. I managed to catch the second wave of the set, the succeeding swells broke well outside the waiting group of boys leaving them in the bone-yard and making it impossible to ride this series of waves. As for me, a twenty-five foot solid wall of water stretched out clear across the Bay of Walkiki and offered perfect slide toward public-baths break which was cleared by a wide margin. The ride was clean as far as chuna-surf [Cunhāsi] where it was necessary to run into the break of the then fifteen-foot wave; this would have been the finish had it not been for the perfect balance and heavy weight of my favorite surf-board which took this and the smaller breaks in fine style from chuna [Cunhāsi] into shore.

By carefully watching the wave preceding it was easy to determine a good course—as this wave showed, by its breaking action, where my wave was steep and good to ride, or flat and hard to hold. To aid the board past a flat part of the swell a semi-kneeling position was assumed to cheat the wind; this also threw the body-weight forward on the board. Only the great weight and stream-lined shape of the board enabled it to carry past the few flat parts of the wave.

—Blake, "How Far?" p. 27.

[On Ni'ihau] Kamamaoa is the general surfing break near the sand beach, but much further out there was another surfing break called 'Ōhī'a. The *kāpuna he'e nalu* would challenge the younger surfers to come out with them to this outer break. It was a long paddle out there, and they would paddle with their arms and alternate with kicking their feet as they tired. When they reached the takeoff area, the *kāpuna* would tell the 'ōpio (young surfers) to wait in a specific spot while they paddled out further to await the right wave. When the right wave came, the *kāpuna* would yell at the 'ōpio to catch the wave as they (the *kāpuna*) paddled to catch it. The object was that as many as possible would ride the wave together. This style of sharing a wave with others stands in sharp contrast to the practice of surfing today, in which most surfers want to have the wave exclusively for themselves. Although friends do share waves occasionally, the mainstream practice of one person on one wave is such that violence does erupt at surf spots on crowded days or when someone inadvertently or intentionally rides the same wave along with someone else. The older, more experienced surfers describe the skilled surfers stacking themselves up purposely, some higher on the wave so as to be right above the other and all sliding in formation like birds flying together as they head for home at the end of the day.

As soon as all the surfers were on the wave, the *kāpuna* would give them directions to help them stay with the wave. Evidently, the wave at 'Ōhī'a traveled over several shallow and deep areas as it made its way to the beach. If one didn't follow the directions of the *kāpuna* when they called out to turn left or right on the way to shore, you could very well end up over a deep spot where the wave would flatten out and you would be sitting dead in the water while all the rest continued to shore.

—Andrade, *Pae I Ke One*, p. 9.

None of the boards had fins on them and most of the surfers surfed in the prone position. The boards were steered by throwing arms or legs into the water on the side of the board that one wanted to turn towards. If control was lost, the boards would go sideways and even backwards. Pāpā Malaki Kanahale said that intentionally turning the board sideways to the beach and letting your body stream out perpendicular to it was a technique used to regain control of the board in the event that the whole wave broke and you were caught by a lot of whitewater. You would continue to ride the board with your body perpendicular to it until you got control and then slide back on top of it as you pointed the board to resume sliding in the direction you wished to go.

—Andrade. *Pae I Ke One*. p. 9.

Practically aside, position changes and different stances in a traditional surfer's personal style may have also been marks of athleticism and aesthetics. Suggestions of this are found in the passages that follow.

I ka au ana a hiki i kulana heenali, ua waiho ia mai iho ko ke kamaaina, a lana wale aku la no keia i waho, me ke kali hoi no ke ku ana mai o ka nalu. Ia ia no hoi e lana ana, ku mai la ka nalu mua, aole keia i pae, a pela no hoi i ka lua a me ke kolu o ka nalu, aka, i ka opu ana mai o ka ha o ka nalu, o ko ia nei hoono iho la no ia a pae. I ka hoono ana no, ua oi kau no ke akamai, a me ka hiehie hanohano haale. Ia wa, ua uwa kapihe a haalele wale, uwa hou no a haalele wale, uwa hou haalele wale. O na alii a pau a me ka poe makakahi no ke akamai o Kelela.

—*Ka Nūpepa Kiōkōa*. AUG 19, 1865.

When [Kelel] reached the place where the surf broke, she left that place to the *kama'āina* and paddled on out to wait for a wave to rise. As she floated on her board there, the first wave rose up but she did not take it, nor did she take the second or third wave, but when the fourth wave swelled up, she caught it and rode it to shore. As she caught the wave, she showed herself unsurpassed in skill and grace. The chiefs and people who were watching burst out in cheering—the cheering rising and falling, rising and falling.

—Kamakau. *Tales and Traditions*. p. 48.

ʻŌhe lua o ka nani o nei he'e nalu i 'ike 'ia, 'Ōle nō ho'i i maopopo i nā kānaka, 'o wai la keia po'e he'e nalu a ke akamai mai wale e hehi kū a'e nei i nā 'āle 'āhina o ka moana. Ua komo ho'i ka ho'ohuoi i loko o nā mea a pau no ke 'ano o ke kanaka e kū ana me ka pū'ū palā'ā. Ua ho'ohālike loa lākou i nā kālana a pau ia kanaka me ko ke alii 'o Lohi'au.

—Nogelmeier. *Ka Mōolelo*. p. 235.

Nothing could compare to the beauty of this surfing. The crowd did not know who these people could be, surfing so expertly, traversing the thrashing swells of the sea. Everyone was curious about the nature of the man surfing on a skirt of *palā'ā* fern. They thought, though, that all the stances he took resembled those of their chief, Lohi'au.

—Nogelmeier. *The Epic Tale*. p. 222.

During the late 1800s, the popularity of surfing among Hawaiians declined considerably. The cultural framework that had elevated the sport

to a national pastime no longer existed, changed forever by the impact of Western civilization. The introduction of new religions, new diseases, new economy, new forms of government, and new interests took Hawaiians in many different directions. They continued to surf, which is evident from many sources, including the *kanikau* in the Hawaiian-language newspapers, but in fewer numbers, as surfing changed into an activity practiced by individuals rather than a sport embraced by a nation. During this period, the multiple surfing styles of earlier times seem to have disappeared, with most surfers riding either prone or standing.

When the popularity of surfing revived in Waikīki in the early 1900s, standing was the norm, and today board surfers only ride standing. Body-boarders, knee boarders, and *paiho* riders still ride prone and kneeling, while sitting is limited to surfers on wave skins. Sitting on a surfboard is usually seen only during trick-riding events in surfing contests.

During the late 1950s, one unique surfer adopted the *kīpapa*, or prone, style of surfing, a style he has used all his life. His name is Leigh-Wai Doo. Born in 1946, Doo contracted polio when he was nine months old and lost the use of his legs. As he grew older, his father took him to the beach at Waikīki and taught him how to swim. It was there that he also learned to surf.

My dad would take me down to Sans Souci to exercise my legs. I started surfing at twelve and no matter how much I wiped out, I always bounced back. Surfing changed my life. It gave me a vigorous attitude and showed me that I could do things just as well as a person with strong legs. I also enjoyed being close to nature. In high school, I asked my dad to buy me a commercially made surfboard. When he agreed, I thought how wonderful that he would agree even though his own brother had died from a surfing accident in Waikīki.

—Leigh-Wai Doo. MAR 5, 2008.

Doo became an excellent surfer, riding prone on north and south shore waves. A photo of him surfing at Ala Moana in a 1963 issue of *Surfer magazine* includes this caption:

The second photo from the top finds Leigh-Wai Doo locked in the curl. Leigh-Wai is an amazing surfer who overcame a handicap to learn to surf. Although polio left Doo crippled, he has learned to ride on his hands, turning by dropping his right leg into the wave. He rides well at such places as Ala Moana, Sunset Beach, the Banzai Pipeline, Hale'iwa, and his brave performance is looked up to by surfers everywhere.

—*Surfer*. JUNE-JULY 1963. p. 18.

Another traditional surfing skill was pulling out of a wave to end a ride. In the first passage below, the Hawaiian writer describes two ways to pull out: doing an "island pullout," forcing the nose of the board through the face of a wave and then coming out behind it, or generating enough speed to ride up the face of a wave and go over the top before it closes out. In the second passage the writer describes an "island pullout" as slipping "under the belly of the wave."

Ehā ana hoʻonāke o ia papa, o ke kono ʻho hōko o ka nalu, oia kekehi mea e pio ai, a o ka holo ae no hoi mālama o ka nalu, a o ka ke akamai mau hana no ia.

—*Ka Nūpepa Kuakoa*, MAY 28, 1870, p. 4.

There are two ways to stop a board, by going into the wave, which ends the ride, and by riding up and over the top of the wave. These are the techniques of skilled surfers.

[See also 'I'i, *Fragments*, p. 135.]

In this [surfing] consists the strength of muscle and sleight-of-hand, 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-riider in its watery ruin. The natives do this with admirable intrepidity and skill, riding in, as it were upon the neck and mane of their furious charger; and when you look to see them, their swift race run, dashed upon the rocks or sand, behold, they have slipped under the belly of the wave they rode, and are away outside, waiting for a cruise upon another.

—Cheever, *Life in the Sandwich Islands*, pp. 66–68.

Perhaps the skill among Hawaiian surfers that was least described was barrel riding. Early Western observers saw Hawaiians on small boards catching steep waves, riding through hollow sections, and coming out of them, but as nonsurfers their descriptions of getting barreled were understandably not as exciting as ours today. In the passages that follow, Theodore-Adolphe Barrot in 1836 called it “disappearing for a moment in the midst of the foam,” while Henry Cheever in 1843 called it being “enveloped in foam and spray.”

Towards noon, the entire female population of Kealakekua assembled to bathe in a small bay surrounded by lava rocks: one rock served the bathers for a screen, and they plunged thence entirely naked, into the waves which were breaking upon the shore; a plank six or eight feet in length, and pointed at one end, enabled them to sustain themselves on the crest of the waves. It was indeed, a singular picture—a swarm of young women passing far out to sea, then returning with the swiftness of an arrow, borne upon the foaming crest of the surges which break with the noise of thunder on each side of the bay. I expected every moment to see them dashed against the sharp points of the rocks, but they avoided the danger with surprising address; indeed, danger seemed to delight them, and they dared to defy it with a courage which astonished me. The least movement of their body gave to the plank which sustained them, the desired direction, and disappearing for a moment in the midst of the breakers, they very soon arose from the foam and returned at their ease to run the same race again.

—Barrot, *Unless Hastie Is Made*, pp. 14–15.

Many a man from abroad who has witnessed this exhilarating play, has no doubt only wished that he were free and able to share in it himself. For my part, I should like nothing better, if I could do it, than to get balanced on a board just before a great rushing wave, and so be hurried in half or quarter mile landward with the speed of a race horse, all the time enveloped in foam and spray, but without letting the roller break and tumble over my head.

—Cheever, *Life in the Sandwich Islands*, pp. 66–68.

Traditional Hawaiians, no different from surfers today, had their own

descriptive terms for getting barreled and for the tube or barrel of a wave. They used phrases like *i loko o ka halehale poi'ipi*, which means “inside a hovering barrel,” and the term *hōkepepe*, which means “to crouch or hide” inside a wave. To describe a hollow section of a wave, they used the terms *hōhōwa*, “hollow”; *puku*, “contract or shrink”; and *waha*, “mouth.”

O ka poe akamai o kahi e i ka heenalu, a hele ilaila, e kahi ana oia i kela wahi nalu, a e oho no ka noho maie iho a nana aku i ka hōkepepe mai a na keiki kamāaina o ua nalu iā hōko o kehuahu.

—*Ka Nūpepa Kuakoa*, MAY 14, 1870, p. 4.

Expert surf riders unused to this surf [Huihā] were tossed about by it and found it was wise to sit still and watch the native sons, who were familiar with it, crouch in the flying sprays.

—'I'i, *Fragments*, p. 34.

He keki akamai o Kihapilani no Waikiki i Oahu, no ka nalu o Mahiwa me Kalehu-aweha, ua atilalo i kana hana, aole aia pae ole, mai ke kawaha ale a nalu.

—*Ka Nūpepa Kuakoa*, NOV 18, 1865, p. 1.

Kihapilani was a champion surfer at Waikiki, Oahu, specifically at the surf spots of Mahiwa and Kalehuawehe. He was an expert in his field. He never missed a wave, from the great barrels of the ocean waves to the surf near shore.

E hōhōi ae ana o Nuannupahu i ka puku o ka nalu halehale, ihuna kela, kaalalo no ka mana.

—*Ka Nūpepa Kuakoa*, FEB 9, 1867, p. 1.

Nuannupahu turned his board toward the barrel of a huge wave. He was on top, and the shark passed under him.

[See also Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs*, p. 107.]

O ka waha o ka ale,

Papoi iho ia o la make.

—Jornander, *Collection*, VOL. V, p. 89.

The mouth of the wave,
Will close over you and you die.

—p. 88.

Other parts of a wave include the *alo*, or face, *hōkua*, or shoulder, *hōnuu*, or base, *hū'a*, or whitewater, *kua*, or back, *muku*, or curl, and *nī'o*, or peak.

In some descriptions of surfing, Hawaiian writers noted a similarity between surfers and sea birds, specifically those birds that glide over the surface of the ocean. Surfers today still see these birds, especially when schools of fish are running near shore, as they glide through the lineup, rarely flapping their wings as they ride the updrafts along the faces of waves. Hawaiian boobles (family Sulidae) are among the most common birds that glide through Hawaii's surf spots. Known to Hawaiians as *ā* or *ka'upu*, one of their favorite foods is flying fish, which are found in many places, including the waters off Waikiki. Other birds identified with surfing include the *iwa*, the *takhi*, and the *noia*.

Ua ʻōlelo ʻia, ʻo ke kaha ʻana a ka manu ʻiwa i ka ʻehu o ka makani, he hapa ʻiho kona
u i i ka ulumāhiehie o ke kaha ʻana a nei aliʻi wahine i ka hūʻā o ka nalu.

—Nogelmeier. *Ka Moʻolelo*. p. 81.

It was said that the gliding of the ʻiwa bird on the fringes of the wind was only half
as beautiful as the glory of this chiefs' stance when she skimmed the white crest of
the waves.

—Nogelmeier. *The Epic Tale*. p. 77.

ʻO kona lele akula nō ia me he manu ʻākīhi keʻēhi ʻāle lā, kau ana i ka niʻo o ka nalu.

—Nogelmeier. *Ka Moʻolelo*. p. 233.

He flew like a wave-flitting ʻākīhi bird as he perched on the crest of the wave.

—Nogelmeier. *The Epic Tale*. p. 218.

ʻO kona mau hōa hehehi pū ma nei heʻe nalu ʻana, ʻo ia nā ʻākīhi keʻēhi ʻāle, ka noʻio, a
pela wale aku. Hōōkahi ia noho like ʻana o lakou i luna o ka ʻāle o ke kai.

—Nogelmeier. *Ka Moʻolelo*. p. 233.

His fellow surfers were the wave-chasing birds, the ʻākīhi, the noʻio, and such, all
riding on the same comb of the sea.

—Nogelmeier. *The Epic Tale*. p. 218.

ʻO nā hōōkākākaha ʻana a ua kanaka lā i luna o ke kākāla o ka nalu, he kaʻupu hehi
ʻāle ka hōa hāhāeo e like ai.

—Nogelmeier. *Ka Moʻolelo*. p. 234.

The man's effortless manner of gliding on the crest of the surf would have been a
proud match for a billow-treading kaʻupu bird.

—Nogelmeier. *The Epic Tale*. p. 222.

He mau eheu no ke kaupu la ke api o kona lauoho.

Her [Keleā] hair fluttered like the wings of the kaʻupu bird.

—Kamakau. *Tales and Traditions*. p. 45.

O ka lealea ewalu, he heenalū, ua waihoia keia hehehi, no ka nalu ole o kahi e hee ai.
O keia hoi kekahi mea a makou i ake nui ai e ike, ka pakaka ana i luna o ka hōkua
o ka ale, me he manu kaupu la e hōōkākāha ana i kona mau eheu i ka iti kai, a e
hoonoho hoolai ana i Muliwaa me ke kopi ole o na huna kai i ka mea e hee ana;
aka ua hāule ʻiho la ka manaoana no ka nalu ole.

—Ka Lahui Hawaii. JUNE 14, 1877. p. 2.

The eighth recreational event was surfing, but these races were not held because
there were no waves to surf. This is one thing that we wanted to see and that was
[surfers] skimming along on the shoulder of the wave like a kaʻupu bird gliding
on his wings on the surface of the sea, poised at the back of the board without
being sprinkled with foam while surfing. But our hopes faded when there was no
surf.

Kau ka kāmāhine mai ke kai o Mokuiki,

Mai ka nalu hui la o Kahuaʻāle,

Aloha ia nalu a kau ka kāmāhine e hee ai,

Me he kaupu kīkaha ia i ka iti o ke kai,

I ka hee no i ka muku a hee i ka lala,

—Ko Hawaii Pae Aina. MAY 22, 1880. p. 4.

My dear daughter from the sea at Mokuiki,

From the waves that break at Kahuaʻāle,

How I love the waves my daughter would surf,

Like a kaʻupu bird gliding over the surface of the sea,

Surfing in the curl and surfing in a slide.

He Kaupu mai au no Pūhele,

Ka manu a-e ale o ka moana.

—Ko Hawaii Pae Aina. FEB 26, 1887. p. 4.

I am a kaʻupu bird from Pūhele,

The bird that traverses the waves of the ocean.

Aole i launa me Kainuwai,

Me ke Kaupu au o ka moana.

—Ko Hawaii Pae Aina. OCT 5, 1889. p. 4.

He has not met with Kainuwai,

The kaʻupu bird that travels the open ocean.

Perhaps the flight of these sea birds influenced the surfing styles of tra-
ditional surfers, as George Chaney in 1880 noted in the passage below, when
he watched surfers in Hilo Bay riding with their arms outstretched.

See that man on his surf-board coming in on the perilous edge of the wave. He
is actually standing upright on the tottering chip beneath him. With arms out-
stretched and body held in perfect poise he comes, fearless of fall, because equally
ready for every issue of his venture.

—Chaney. *Aloha*. p. 177.

In the early photos of surfers in Waikīkī, many of them are riding with
their arms extended, like the wings of a gliding bird. One of these photos is
on the cover of DeSoto Brown's book *Surfing: Historic Images from Bishop
Museum Archives*. The surfer's arm positions are partially for balance, but
they are also definitely posed, perhaps a remnant of a style from an earlier
time in the history of surfing. Today, the arms out, "gliding bird" style of
surfing is used only by a few bodysurfers and *paipo* riders.

SURFBOARDS AS PADDLEBOARDS

Paddleboards are specialty surfboards that are designed for exercise and
racing. Long and narrow in shape, they are usually not used for surfing,
but rather are paddled either in a prone or kneeling position. *Papa ole*, the
longest of the traditional Hawaiian surfboards, were made for surfing big
waves, but Hawaiians also used them as paddleboards. In the first passage
that follows, Kihapīlani, the king of Maui, paddles a *papa ole* from Hono-
lūā Bay on West Maui to Waiāluā on East Molokai, showing that Hawaiians
not only used surfboards as paddleboards, but that they also paddled the