# The Geography of Surfing:
## Surfing culture, history, and spatial diffusion

http://www.geog.ucsb.edu/~sweeney/g20/g20.htm

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-  
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Introduction

Surf Culture

- Why conduct research about surf culture?
- How would we do the research? What would be the questions? What would we present as evidence?
- "Eye of the beholder" – different academic specialist would see value in different questions.
  - Historians/Archaeologists: What is the history of culture? Where did it come from and what key factors are related to its evolution.
  - Anthropologists: What are the characteristics of modern / current surf cultures? How does the culture differ in one place compared to another?
  - Other specialists: geneticists, epidemiologists, linguists, etc..
  - Geographic concepts as a basic form of reasoning

Surf Culture

- Film clip 1: Shaun Tomson biography – Surfer’s Journal
- Film clip 2: Glass Love (Andrew Kidman film)

Lecture Plan

- Describe how geographers study cultural landscapes.
- Present the current state of research about the origins of Polynesian culture up to the time of European conquest.
  - Highlight geographic concepts and reasoning used in supporting current theories.
- Examine the specific cultural context and timing of the rebirth of surfing.
Describe modern surfing culture and differences among Hawaii, California, and Australia; and among subregions of California.

Cultural geography and cultural landscapes

Haggett: "scientific geography" approach
- reduce subject matter into measurable facts
- look for patterns to assess veracity (degree of truth) among competing hypotheses
- "... culture describes patterns of learned human behavior that form a durable template by which ideas and images can be transferred from one generation to another, or from one group to another." Haggett (2001, pp. 204)

Culture traits (atoms or basic units of culture)
Cultural complex (interrelated set of traits)
Acculturation process
- Culture is acquired through speech and behavior (imprinting).
- Increasing level of familiarity and comfort with a culture – acceptable responses to a given situation.

Mentifacts: Central core of culture related to ideas, ideals, and beliefs. They are fundamental to intergenerational transmission of culture. Examples include language, religion, and folklore.
Sociofacts: Aspects of culture related to social behavior, cohesion, and control. Examples include norms related to family, marriage, and childrearing, as well as institutional manifestations such as educational or political systems.
Artifacts: The material manifestations of culture: clothing, tools, technologies, athletic equipment.

Haggett: sometimes an "...intractable knot..."
**Culture Regions**

- Culture traits (basic units), complex (interrelated traits)
- **Culture region**: complex that has a spatial footprint or areal extent.
  - Need to confirm that traits or material culture are primarily located in a particular domain.
  - The existence of a culture region requires explanation of its evolution. How did it get there? Did it displace or merge with prior cultures in that location?

**Cultural Diffusion**

**Carriers**

- **Expansion**: Trait is transferred from individual to individual by direct contact and the carrier remains "infected." The population with the trait increases over time.
- **Relocation**: Trait is moved from one location to another by the carriers. The population with the trait may not increase over time.
- **Contagious**: Trait is transferred by direct contact and distance is usually major barrier. The dread factor.
- **Hierarchical**: Trait may leapfrog through geographic space in a systematic way. The attributes of the places in the hierarchy and the connectivity among the places are of central importance.

**Barriers**

- **Absorbing**: Diffusion process stops.
- **Reflecting**: Diffusion process continues but in a different direction.
- **Permeable**: Diffusion process continues but is weakened or altered. Only some traits continue to diffuse.
Oceania Geography

Traditional Culture Regions

Source: Hurles et al. (2003)

Oceania Geography

Near and Far Oceania, Cultural Diffusion

Source: Hurles et al. (2003)
BP versus BC/AD

Following Kirch (2000), Before Present (BP) refers to the number of years ago from approximately now, or "the present." These year ranges will generally be based on radio-carbon dating of archaeological evidence. BC/AD will be used increasingly as events are actually recorded historically in written or oral accounts. The traditional cultural regions do not actually work that well as culture regions in the sense that melanisia and micronesia contain considerable cultural variation. More recent scholarship suggests the use of Near and Far Oceania. It matches the historical progression of settlement in the region and preserves the Polynesian (Far Oceania) culture region, which, according to Kirch demarcates a "...robust phyletic unit."

Polynesia and the cultural origins of surfing

Oceanic Prehistory
- Kirch - Big structures and large processes
- "long run of Pacific history, observations are not tied to any one time or place, because indeed there are movements and trends that transcend the particular." Kirch (302)
- Structures/processes:
  - Voyaging
  - Language, Biology, and Culture
  - Demographic Change and Oceanic Population Sizes
  - Dynamic landscapes, specialization, and intensification
- Evidence: [language, archaeology, and biology] + spatial reasoning

Voyaging
Stage 1
- Human migrations part of the long sweep of evolution
- Coastal dwelling population of SE Asia develops early seafaring technology to explore and settle New Guinea and Australia (60,000BP [Before Present]), and Near Oceania (30,000BP)
- Rapid settlement of Near Oceanic and Sahul. Visible targets, max distance approx 90km., low population densities
Voyaging (cont.)

Stage II

- 20,000 years elapse before next wave of seafaring innovations
- "...evidence is indirect and highly inferential: the appearance of obsidian hundreds of kilometers from beyond its source..." (Kirch 303)
- Major shift in cultural perception of the natural environment (*mentafact*); move resource to suite humans rather than moving humans to resources.
- "Sailing outrigger canoe complex"

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Voyaging (cont.)

Stage II (cont.)

- "Sailing outrigger canoe complex"
  - Emerges off SE Asia between 4,000 and 2,000 BC
  - Dugout canoe, float, and plaited mat sail capable of covering long distances of **Far Oceania**
  - Cultural outlook changes: horticulture; claim, settle, divide, and deed territory to successive generations
  - Ocean highway network: 1) distance and interaction, 2) social caste of seafarers/navigators

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Voyaging

Source: Lewis (1972)
Voyaging
Patterns of Island interaction
Source: Lewis (1972)

Language, Biology, and Culture

- LBC as a rule are not supposed to be correlated
- "The many Polynesian societies and cultures together form a robust phyletic unit – all speaking genetically related languages, with common cultural patterns and a high degree of biological similarity – who descended from a common ancestral group." (Kirch 305)
- The LBC patterns reflect a real migration history
  - Melanesian culture complex first (very old), Near Oceania
  - Lapita culture complex / Austronesia-speaking arrives later (1500-1400BC) and expands into Far Oceania

Lapita / Austronesian speaking

The Lapita culture, indicated by Lapita pottery, appears suddenly on several islands in the range 1500-1400BC. The Lapita were part of the Austronesian language speaking population that emerged from Taiwan around 3000BC then expanded into Near Oceania and eventually into Far Oceania.

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Language, Biology, and Culture

Settlement and cultural diffusion

Source: Hurles et al. (2003)

Language, Biology, and Culture

Source: Matisoo-Smith et al. (1998)
Demographic Change and Oceanic Population Sizes

- Higher densities in Far Oceania. Why?
- Theory: Malaria and other parasitic diseases are absent
- Populations grow large (~100,000+ on large islands) and eventually reach carrying capacity
- Feedback: Cultural adjustments to reduce fertility or increase mortality
- How big were populations at eve of European conquest?

Dynamic landscapes, specialization, and intensification

- Original natural environment of islands massively disturbed by human settlement (loss of hundred to thousands of endemic species).
- Humans alter landscape to increase food production, beyond extraction, the economic innovations impact social structure.
- Complex social specialization and stratification.

Geography Concepts / Spatial Reasoning

- Reasoning from observed patterns in language, biology, or archaeology to infer regions
- From regions and time stamp infer diffusion of culture
- Environment, and perception of environment, condition human activities
- Humans leave substantial imprint on the natural environment
- Surfing Culture: Why Hawaii???

European conquest and the decline of surfing

Hawaiian culture, pre-contact

- Hawaii archipelago is large, temperate, lacks environmental constraints of other Polynesian islands
- Conditions support large, complex society
  - First colonizers arrive from Marquesas Islands
  - Continued economic / social interaction with other Polynesian islands
  - After 1300AD, Hawaii is isolated and sets different development path
- Forms of surf-riding present elsewhere in Polynesia; only Hawaii develops stand-up board riding.
Hawaiian culture, pre-contact

- Forms of surf-riding present elsewhere in Polynesia; only Hawaii has stand-up board riding.
- Possible progression / evolution:
  - Basic canoe surfing begets bodysurfing
  - Body boarding (mostly children)
  - Body boarding with bigger boards (adults)
  - Stand-up surfing (only Hawaii)
- What are the roles of isolation, site, and situation in the pinnacle of surfing occurring in Hawaii?
Hawaiian cultural timeline

Source: Kirch (2000), Fig. 8.28, pp. 292

Hawaiian culture, pre-contact

- Highly stratified social/political/economic order
- **Ahupua’a system** ("pig alter")
  - Island partitioned into strips / valleys from mountain ridge to shoreline
  - Single partition governed by a lesser chief (*ali‘i ‘ai ahupua’a*)
  - Paramount chief (*ali‘i ‘ai moku*) rules over whole island (*moku*)
  - Commoners work land and exchange tribute for protection
- **Ali‘i**: divine lineage, carriers of *mana* (life force), control land and means of production, act as benefactors of craft specialists.

Hawaiian culture, pre-contact

- **Kapu system**
  - Prohibitions and cultural practices that differentiate Hawaiians by gender and rank
  - Craft specialists are differentiated by rank and are subject to kapu system
  - Kapu system evolves as needs surface (ex. Sandalwood trade), operates as *sociofact*
- Surfing is situated within the broader cultural complex of Kapu and Ahupua’a systems
  - *Olo* boards only for Ali‘i, made by "craft" specialist of wili-wili wood; surfed at restricted royal breaks.
  - Commoners made own boards from koa (heavier wood)
**cultural restrictions details**

Women lower than men; separate eating quarters, not allowed to eat pig, bananas, etc. wrt surfing, chiefs had more leisure time to surf.

Kapu system as solution to free-rider problem: With scarce resource, impose restriction to avoid overexploitation. Sandalwood initially has no value, after trade routes open to US, China, etc., King Kamehameha puts kapu on young trees to save them for future generations.

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**Hawaiian cultural timeline**

![Hawaiian cultural timeline](image)

*Source: Kirch (2000), Fig. 8.28, pp. 292*

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**Hawaii, conquest and decline**

- 1778 Cook: Hawaiian population $\sim 400,000$
- Cultural disruptions:
  - **disease**: STDs (syphilis and gonorrhea); during 1800s TB, measles, influenza, etc; 15,000 die in cholera epidemic in 1804.
  - **social**: King Kamehameha consolidates control of islands using Western guns and advisors; after he dies (1819), the *kapu* system is abolished. Why?
  - **economic**: under King Kamehameha, Hawaii becomes central node in Pacific trade. Introduction of goods and ideas. Hawaiians volunteer or are conscripted into global commodities trade.
  - **religious**: After abolition of kapu system, Christian missionaries make strong in-roads into cultural-religious life of Hawaiians.
**Conquest**

Cook explorations are in spirit of Enlightenment; they are interested in local culture, not just commerce and imperialism.

Population estimates range from 100,000-1,000,000. Very difficult to estimate.

Many infectious diseases arrive with Chinese immigrant laborers during the 1800s. The laborers are brought in to work field labor jobs that Hawaiians are unwilling to do.

After first voyage and second voyage, Cook finds that STDs have dispersed to all the Hawaiian islands – example of inter-island commerce and social interaction.

"The commoners were faced with the loss of a sanctified production-redistribution-consumption system. The most obvious and immediate consequence of this desanctification was that fish pond and other food crop production was disrupted. As keepers of the lunar calendar which scheduled agricultural labor, the priests of Lono were essential to the continued production of foodstuffs. After the supporters of the kapu abolition defeated the forces of Kekuaokalani-which included Lono’s kahuna-nui-these priests no longer kept the calendar. The commoners then became easy prey to self-conscious agents of social change, the haole traders, missionaries, and whalers." S. Lee Seaton (1974) "The Hawaiian ‘kapu’ Abolition of 1819" American Ethnologist Vol. 1, No. 1, (Feb., 1974), pp. 193-206

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**Cook, HMS Resolution**

Source: Moser (2008)

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**Cook voyage excerpts**

include some passages here from Moser’s article/anthology. Or see course reader.
Hawaii, conquest and decline

- 1778: pure Hawaiian population ~ 400,000
- 1896: pure Hawaiian population ~ 31,019.

Impacts on Surfing Culture:

- Surfing is tied to kapu system; its loss means the loss of the craft specialist board makers
- Surfing is associated with gambling, nakedness, and other "evils" of Hawaiian culture; Calvinist missionaries are opposed
- Integration into global commerce / formal economy would impact leisure time and cultural values

By 1900, surfing is no longer practiced except in a few, possibly remote locations.

Note: isolation leads to development of surfing; isolation also possibly saves it.

Population numbers

The population continues to collapse (pure Hawaiian / part-Hawaiian)

1920 (23,723 / 18,027) 1960 (11,294 / 91,109) 1984 (8,244 / 200,000) 2000 (7,000 / 250,000)


From isolation argument we can infer that cultural diffusion process was expansion-contagious. Not migration because "Western" culture remained in the west while also imprinting on Hawaii. Also, contagious because distance (remoteness) was an effective barrier once western culture started to diffuse.

Olo: Prominent location

Source: Kampion (2003)

Surfboards were valued possessions and symbols of community status. In the case of the long olo surfboards used by royalty, a complex of rituals surrounded the cutting and finishing of the board. A Hawaiian homestead, c. 1825.
Surfboards: Olo, Alaia, and Paipo

Source: Kampion (2003)

The lone surfer

Source: Kampion (2003)
Surfing renaissance

Three young surfers with boards in 1930s. Source: Seversan (1964)

Malloy on Alaia

Surfing renaissance

■ Individuals interacting with place, 1900-1930.
■ Big Three:
  ♦ Jack London
  ♦ Alexander Hume Ford
  ♦ George Freeth
■ Duke Kahanamoku
■ Tom Blake

Hawaii’s situation

■ "Circumstances were emerging..." that would allow a revival.
■ Changing situation of Hawaii
  ♦ becomes an American Territory
  ♦ Pacific Cable, communication link
  ♦ Steamship service
  ♦ Strategic location for military and trade
■ Political / Economic leaders wanting to seize the moment

Situation of Hawaii, 1900

"...circumstances were emerging which, if they wouldn’t exactly encourage a revival, would at least allow one to happen. Hawaii was now an official American Territory with a representative in Congress and an energetic new Governor. The Pacific Cable, laid in 1902, opened daily communication with the mainland and regular steamship service increased soon thereafter. The islands seemed closer, more accessible, and the vast potential of tourism was just being recognized." Smith (2003) pp. 31.

note 1 of slide 48

Alexander Hume Ford

■ Arrives in Hawaii, 1907, age 39; Stalled career.
■ Hooked on surfing
■ Part of traveling delegation touring islands with objective of fostering economic development.
  ♦ Connected to "movers and shakers"
  ♦ Has idea to "brand" islands with surfing.

“Ford graciously gave Jack London the credit for surfing’s revival, but Ford himself was the mastermind. It was Ford who envisioned surfing’s role in the new Hawaii. It was Ford who lured London to the waves in the first place. And, most importantly, it was Ford who devoted decades to promoting and nurturing the sport. Surfing wasn’t just a passion for Ford – it became his mission.” Smith (2003), pp. 31.

“When Ford arrives in Honolulu in the early days of 1907, he was a man without a family, without a home, and with a career seemingly in decline. … Decades later Ford claimed, ‘it was the thrill of the surfboard that brought (him) to Hawaii.’ He stated that as a schoolboy he fantasized over pictures in his geography book showing Hawaiians standing on the tiniest of boards...poised up the crest of monster rollers,’ and that he longed to come to the Islands.” pp. 32

“Ford...learned of the ambitious plans the U.S. government held for their new possession. They wanted to ‘Americanize’ the islands with increased migration from the mainland. More importantly, President Theodore Roosevelt, with his expansionist policies, was about to implement a massive military build-up. Hawaii had suddenly attained a new and unexpected strategic significance.” pp. 32

"Ford touted surfing as a natural resource that could be promoted for Hawaii’s betterment – a means of ‘branding’ the Islands."

Ford lobbying leads to creation of the Outrigger Canoe Club.

"The revival of surfing, particularly its formal acknowledgement by the territorial rulers, brought some measures of pride back to the Hawaiians. they had suffered a century of Calvinist scolding, political confusion, and severe population decline. … At long last, a Hawaiian tradition was being recognized and valued. This was perhaps Ford’s greatest contribution to the people of Hawaii."

Nice little ”Decline of surfing” box in the article.

note 1 of slide 49

Jack London

- Celebrity writer and adventure seeker, arrives in Hawaii, May 1907
  - Approached by Ford to try sport and promote it.
- Publishes "Riding the South Seas Surf", Oct. 1907, Women’s Home Companion
  - republished in 1908 Pall Mall Magazine, and in 1911 Cruise of the Snark
- Impact almost immediate, starts stream of national / international media attention.
Excerpts/comments from Smith (2003) on London

"'Riding the South Seas Surf' is an evocative, rewarding read even today. But at the time, its influence was immense. It is probably the single most important piece of literature in the history of surfing." pp. 27. "Jack London was a celebrity – a 'superstar.' People paid attention to what he said and did." pp. 28

Prior observers thought Hawaiians had "amphibian" qualities, critical to surfing. London changed this perception. London gives celebrity endorsement to the sport, as requested by Ford. London "...was not unmindful of the kokua (assistance) it [his endorsement] might possibly prove in bringing about Ford's ambitions for Waikiki. This might lead one to be cynical about the event ad the manipulation it implies, but that would be unjust. ...London’s genuine enthusiasm for the sport."

London had a great deal of respect for Hawaii and Hawaiians.

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George Freeth

- Born in Hawaii, mixed race (hapa haole)
- starts with 16' olo borrowed from uncle (legend)
- part of local resurgence of surfing; Kahanmoku brothers part of his group.
- Travels to California 1907
  - Mission: introduce surfriding in CA
  - Financing from "Hawaiian Promotion Committee"
  - Paid surfing demos in Venice and Redondo, CA
- "First great waterman of the modern era" - Swimmer, diver, boatman, fisherman, outrigger canoeist, sailor, first professional lifeguard in California, Congressional Gold Medal for bravery, founds lifesaving service in California, and introduces waterpolo to California.

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Excerpts/comments from Smith (2003) on Ford/Freeth.

In addition to surfing, Freeth also experimented with board design.

"Except for a few short trips back to Honolulu, George spent the remaining years of his life roaming the coastline between San Francisco and San Diego. This was a landmark period for the development of surfing. The Hawaiian 'Sport of Kings' was now firmly established on the mainland."

"Freeth was reputed to have reintroduced the art of standing on a surfboard. Though this cannot be substantiated, there is no doubt that Freeth was an exceptional surfer and all-around waterman. ... What was particularly notable about these surfers [the group led by Freeth] is that a number of them were white. Second- and third-generation haoles were being drawn into the sport." Smith (2003) pp. 31

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Freeth on surfboard

Source: Smith (2003)

George Freeth (cont.)

- Freeth plants the "...seeds of the new surf culture on the West Coast."
  - Fit with emerging beach lifestyle.
  - Unemployment / underemployment; he lived to surf.
  - Dies 1919 (age 35); influenza pandemic
Duke and Blake

- Duke Kahanamoku:
  - Career also orchestrated by Alexander Hume Ford
  - Embodiment of the sport
  - Competes in multiple Olympic games and tours the world giving surfing demonstrations
  - Timeline: Surfer Magazine

- Tom Blake
  - Born 1902, Wisconsin
  - Meets Duke in 1920, Detroit, MI
  - Major innovator of beach lifestyle and surfboard design.

Duke Kahanamoku

Take a look at the Duke Kahanamoku timeline from Surfer Magazine available on the course website Lectures menu. He earned medals in four Olympics and travelled the world giving surfing/swimming/water safety demonstrations. His diffusion path was through the major cities of the developed world and especially the major coastal cities. He was the agent of diffusion, following a hierarchical (city) path, and introduced the sport and culture or, if already present, popularized it in many places. He was responsible for the first global diffusion of the sport. He was the primary mechanism of diffusion to Australia (Freeth had already been in California early).
Standing ovation

“When Duke removed his robe overseas as a young man, people marveled at his physique, often breaking out into standing ovations.” Source: Surfer Magazine 40th anniversary issue

Duke in Australia

Australians had a board. Duke showed them how to use it. Source: Surfer Magazine 40th anniversary issue
Geography Concepts / Spatial Reasoning

- Initial cultural diffusion process from "West" almost annihilates traditional Hawaiian culture. Only selected aspects remain but their integration into a larger cultural complex is gone.
- Surfing continues to be emblematic of human-environment interaction; It’s genesis / evolution from Polynesia and Hawaii is pure instance of HE interaction.
- Site and situation characteristics play an important role in surfing’s emergence, decline, survival, and rebirth.

Geography Concepts / Spatial Reasoning (cont.)

- The diffusion of the sport from Hawaii to California, Australia, and Europe is an excellent example of a cultural diffusion process.
  - Freeth to California; Duke to Australia, US, and Europe: expansion-hierarchical. Why?
  - Hierarchical aspect also present in the use of print media (London).
  - Once established in a place, process is primarily expansion-contagious. Why?

Modern surfing culture(s)

Global diffusion of surfing

## Cultural Trajectories and Interactions

- **Hawaii**
  - Commerce versus tradition
  - Waikiki scene
  - Blake, surf ethic, and board design innovations

- **California**
  - Strong connections to Hawaii, board design innovations
  - Beach life ethic, "Nature=God", Camaraderie
  - San Onofre, PV - Paddleboard Cove

- **Australia**
  - Lifesaving clubs, regimentation, competitions
  - Victorian ethic restricting interactions with ocean

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### Surf lifesaving competition, Australia

![Surf lifesaving competition, Australia](image)
Regimentation, Australia

Dimensions of modern cultural variation

- **Mentifacts**
  - Surf language
  - Philosophies (nature, "soul", competition)
  - Ethical conduct / style norms

- **Sociofact**
  - Surf clubs, JGs, cliques
  - Written codes / rules
  - Orgs. (Groundswell, Surfrider, etc.)

- **Artifact**
  - Surf shacks, other folk architecture
  - Wave riding tools / wetsuits
  - Commercial surf-wear / gear
  - Media (print, film, www)

Surfer’s Journal documentary segments

- Bud Brown - *Filmmakers* - **min. 0:00-10:47**
- Hal Jepson - *Filmmakers* - **min. 0:00-9:45; 13:09-20:10**
- Narrabeen - *Great Waves* - **min. 0:42-14:36**
Culture reflected and diffused through film

I showed segments of the above three surf documentaries from Surfer’s Journal. Bud Browne represents the early period of surfing – he started surfing in the 1930s – and he was the primary innovator of the "Surf Film" as he captured the surf culture scene in the 1930s-1950s. Hal Jepson became a major force in the 1960s and his films do a great job of capturing the California surf culture and also demonstrate how much that culture continued to interact with Hawaii. The documentary on Narrabeen was included to show how the surf culture emerged and became distinct in one of the most important Australian surf towns. Here are some detailed notes on each documentary:

note 1 of slide 66

**Bud Browne**

- Bud Browne (born 1912) emerges from the same waterman culture pioneered by George Freeth. He grows up in Santa Monica, attends USC where he is captain of the swim team, and then becomes a Los Angeles County Ocean Lifeguard in 1938. While working as a lifeguard he starts surfing hollow wooden boards (these would have been manufactured by Tom Blake). In WW II he travels to Hawaii and surfs there, probably at Waikiki. He starts filming surf in the early 1950s and screens his first surf film in 1953 at Adams School in Santa Monica, California. The film is wildly popular with the local surfers and he starts releasing one film a year and touring with it on the California coast between San Francisco and San Diego. The films are shown in small venues (school auditoriums, Rotary clubs, etc.) and he narrates them live as the film roles. Not until 1961 is he able to add a sound track and have the film travel independently.

- In terms of geography aspects for this class, the documentary makes several points. The documentary becomes an important mechanism of diffusion but even though they would contain a lot of footage from Hawaii, the cultural core focused on the California "market" which was still bound by SF to SD (the same territory of George Freeth). The diffusion was limited by the available technology of live narration, thus making a more spatially extension impact not possible until 1961 with the innovation of a soundtrack. As noted in the documentary the locus of "action" in Hawaii in the late 1940s and early 1950s was still Waikiki, but later it shifted to more challenging waves at Makaha (location of the world championship starting in 1954). Notice the surfers featured in that event included women and men but were primarily white and of Californian origin (Rabbit Kekai and one other Hawaiian were an exception). Also, the film noted that the one film featuring Phil Edwards (the Kelly Slater of his day) led to his "...super casual style..." being copied by "...a generation." So, styles and other culture traits were diffused using surf film as the medium. Last, notice that Browne emerged not from Hawaii but came out of the newer surfing culture region of California, and the subregion of the Santa Monica Bay of Los Angeles.

note 2 of slide 66
Hal Jepson

His films captured the mixing of youth counterculture and surfing culture through the 1960s. His first film, *The Cosmic Children* was released in 1969 and "...blew the roof off..." the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium. It did so because it connected to the youth culture in a different way than the 1950s and early 1960s era films that followed the recipe of surfing, corny humor, and wipe-outs – a formula developed by Bud Browne. Instead, Jepson’s film used the latest music for the sound track and looked to film more intense surf. Jepson also came out of the "Santa Monica Bay" subregion culture. He grew up in the 1950s and surfed from Malibu (north end of the Bay) to Palos Verdes "Cove" (south end of the Bay) and after getting his MBA lived in Topanga Canyon (near Malibu). He quit his regular job when his boss suggested he "...give up surfing to play golf." This shows the anti-establishment attitude towards surfing that pervades the U.S.

Key elements of the documentary include the following. His film, as others before, captured stylistic elements and equipment (the fin-drift 360 and the tri-fin) and helped to diffuse those aspects of culture to other parts of the world. The surfers featured still appear to be a combination of Hawaiian and Californian surfers (notably Barry Kanaiaupuni, Jeff Hackman, and Jay Riddle). Barry’s accent / language use seems like a prototype of the ways many surfers talk. Maybe that diffused too. The film notes that Barry was surfing on his own "innovative" surfboard designs and people thought the film was being shown at a fast speed. Again, this is notably because people that couldn’t afford to go to Hawaii, might be inspired to alter their own board designs. Mark Warren, an Australian surfer is interviewed and he notes that the surf films were eagerly awaited, they showed to packed houses, and it was the only way they would see what was going on in Hawaii. Jepson frequently turned the camera back towards the beach and so the films also showed, and may have diffused, aspects of the integration of the music/partying/beach scene from the late 60s (party at Topanga) to the early 1980s (Surf Punks at Huntington Beach,CA).
Narrabeen

Narrabeen:

I showed this because it documents the way Australian surf culture differed from Hawaii and California. It starts with Duke Kahanamoku giving a surfing demonstration at Freshwater Beach in Sydney in 1914. Locals from Narrabeen saw the demonstration and immediately started learning to surf and shaping their own boards. The Narrabeen (and other Australian) surfers must have been isolated from the Hawaii/California board shaping / board riding innovations from the arrival of surfing, 1914, until the mid-1950s. Hollow wood boards were adopted and ridden from the 1930-1950s. As noted above, these were a Tom Blake innovation. He marked the boards especially to professional ocean lifesaving organizations and they may have diffused through that as opposed for surfing directly. In 1956, a group of southern California surfers come to Australia and demonstrate surfing on "Malibu" longboards (the Malibu shape is described in the Kampion reading). The new boards and styles were quickly adopted. This would have been about the time that Bud Browne was already showing surf films up and down the California coast. But Australians are not exposed to the new ideas until the California show up in person. The diffusion in this case would be classified as hierarchical-expansion diffusion (the Californian’s visits follow the Australian city system), but then becomes a expansion-contagious diffusion process after the Californians leave.

The documentary also notes that surfing in Australia is still organized around places defined by Boardriding Clubs. So, Narrabeen has the North Narrabeen Boardriders Club (formed in 1964, the club would be classified as a sociofact) and it becomes a cultural center-point for surfers in the area. Australians are also more focused on competition and this takes place among the network of boardriding clubs. Mark Warren states that, "... the boardriding clubs are the social hub and the competitive hub of Australian surfing." and Tom Carroll added "...we like to get behind a flag." Carroll goes on to say that he thinks the physical geography of north Sydney with headlands defining different beach communities contributed to the strong place identification of surfer and the dominance of the surfriding club structure. In contrast, similar board riding clubs existed in the early California surfing scene but they died out in the 1960s. While geography may be part of the difference, there are also other cultural differences between the Australian and California surfing scenes. Californians developed more along the lines of disconnecting from society and getting close to nature. The "soul surfer", necessarily a loner, probably emerges in 1960s era California. Californian’s are less comfortable getting behind a flag and especially in the 1960s-70s, eschewed competition.

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Announcements

- On Monday, Shaun Tomson will be here as a guest speaker. Please show respect and attend lecture.
- Readings: My notes are best guide for emphasis. Under section II.2, the Matisoo-Smith (Rats) and Friedlaender (Genetic Structure of Pacific Islanders) should only be skimmed to see the depth and sophistication of evidence used in studies of Pacific Islander pre-history. You do not need to understand the technical details of the genetic analysis, statistics, or classification methods. Kirch (2000) is the most important reading for section II.2 and should be read in detail.
- Please use TA Frank Davenport as the first point of contact. His email address is on the syllabus and course website.