Biographical Information:
Although surfing existed for hundreds of years before it was embraced by American culture, the sport did not receive national recognition until the mid-Twentieth Century. The "royal sport for the natural kings" as Jack London called it in 1907, was quickly popularized by the onset on American film, music, and the dedication of professional surfers. Beach themed movies like *Gidget* (1959) and surf music from the Beach Boys and Dick Dale contributed to the Californian allure, and San Diego saw a major increase of surfers out in the water.

Though much of San Diego's early surf history has gone undocumented, most historians agree that the modern age of surfing began in California with the arrival of George Freeth in 1907 and Duke Kahanamoku in 1912. The end of the Second World War saw a marked change in the jovial, communal environment that surfers once embraced. During the war, the military procured major stretches of beach for training grounds, closing many of the best breaks in the process. Technological advancements like foam boards and wetsuits aided the accessibility of the sport, and more and more people were able to get out into the water without discomfort.

In the late 1950's, Southern California saw an explosion in the surf scene, causing more experienced, older surfers to seek out unfound breaks along the coast and into Mexico. The *Gidget* phenomenon drew people from the mainland toward the coast to pursue unrealistic expectations about surf culture. By the 1960's surfing had become part of the American identity. The sport was embraced by the masses on a grand scale.

Whereas surfing was once influenced by the relaxed Hawaiian cultural practices of hula, the ukulele, and the "aloha" spirit, the younger generation of surfers became more interested in slashing and destroying waves, shorter foam boards, and establishing surfing as a youthful counterculture. Cultural transitions during the 1960's also added to the appeal of California beaches, as surfers were seen as individualistic athletes uninterested in corporate city life. The prominence of the short board, coupled with a global interest in competitive surfing marked the departure from the "golden years" of Freeth and the famous Duke Kahanamoku.

San Diego arguably has some of the most consistent surf in the continental US, and several spots are sought out by prominent professional surfers. In 2001, Cortez Bank was discovered one hundred miles west of San Diego, yielding some of the largest waves ever ridden. The discovery of the spot has firmly planted San Diego in the world of big wave surfing, and the county is still a vibrant center for surf culture and art.

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The Surfing Collection documents surfing and surf culture through article clippings and documents, as well as ephemera and media that describe surf culture, surfing’s history, and information about surfing. Series I: Documents contain various articles, bibliographies, and syllabi related to surfing. Series II: Media and Ephemera contains ephemera such as toys, stickers, postcards, playing cards, advertisements, menus, fliers, clippings, as well as several pieces of audiovisual material. Series III: Periodicals includes various surfing periodicals from 1963 to the present. A portion of the Surfing Collection is cataloged, and can be accessed via the library catalog: http://libpac.sdsu.edu/search~S0?/tsurfing+collection/tsurfing+collection/1%2C2%2C752%2CB/exact&FF=tsurfing+collection&1%2C751%2C. 

Documents

Articles and Bibliographies

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Box 1, Folder 40  Ron Drummond, July 30, 1988
Box 1, Folder 41  Mary Ann Hawkins- Midkiff, March 15, 1989 (2)
Box 1, Folder 42  Thomas Edward Blake, April 16, 1989
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Media and Ephemera

Box 2, Folder 1  Toys, games, flyers, handbills, postcards ,stickers
Box 3, Folder 1  Toys, games, handbills, postcards ,stickers
Box 4, Folder 1  Posters, calendars, and oversize materials

Periodicals