

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property



historic name Trestles Historic District

other names/site number Trestles; San Onofre; San Onofre State Beach

## 2. Location

street & number San Onofre State Beach

not for publication

city or town United States Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton

vicinity

state California code CA county San Diego code 073 zip code 92055

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide \_\_\_ local

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer  
Title

California State Office of Historic Preservation  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

\_\_\_ entered in the National Register

\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_ removed from the National Register

\_\_\_ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	2	buildings
		district
7	1	site
	2	structure
		object
7	5	<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE –

Outdoor Recreation

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE –

Outdoor Recreation

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

No style

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: \_\_\_\_\_

walls: \_\_\_\_\_

roof: \_\_\_\_\_

other: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

### Summary Paragraph

Trestles Historic District (Trestles) stretches 2.25 miles on property owned by the United States Department of the Navy operated as the Marine Corps Base at Camp Pendleton in San Diego County. Trestles' contributing resources include seven surf breaks identified from north to south as Upper Trestles (Uppers), Lower Trestles (Lowers), Middles, Church, The Point, Old Man's, and Dog Patch. This portion of California's coastline bends sharply towards the east which causes the beachfront to be south-southwest. Trestles is located at the mouth of the San Mateo Creek within the larger boundaries of San Onofre State Beach, leased by the State of California under a fifty-year agreement with the Department of the Navy. Also included within the district boundary are the two noncontributing railroad trestles for which the district is named. This area is world renowned for its consistent, near perfect waves. It is one of the best locations for year-round surfing in Southern California, an area that supports one of the greatest concentrations of surfers in the world. Sometimes described as "America's most consistent wave zone,"<sup>1</sup> the setting for Trestles is unique and considered exceptional because it is one of the last remaining stretches of Southern California's coast open to the public and not located in an urban setting as are other Southern California surfing spots. Surfers typically reach most of the sites within Trestles by hiking or biking in. Cars are parked off Interstate Highway 5 in public lots or on the street. A limited number of cars are allowed in a small lot at the beach adjacent to the three southern breaks. Surfers going to the northern breaks usually walk, bike, or skateboard carrying their surfboards for about 0.5 mile to the service road (former trail) that runs an additional 0.5 mile through the San Mateo Creek Wetlands Natural Preserve. This setting takes surfers from an urban area to a natural, open space that opens to the beach.<sup>2</sup> The district's surf riding sites are located at the mouth of San Mateo Creek and to the south. The surf is affected by the sand, cobble, and other sediment load moving in and out of the area from the creek. These conditions, assisted by consistent prevailing afternoon west winds, create unique, year-round waves that break at low and high tides. These waves break on a point, tend to be longer, and offer surfers a longer sustained ride.

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## Narrative Description

### Surf Breaks

A wave breaks when the water depth becomes less than one-seventh of the distance between wave crests. A surf break is the place where waves tumble over and break in shallow water, a geographical area that can support surf riding.

Upper Trestles (Uppers) is at the north end of the district's boundary at the mouth of the San Mateo Creek. The creek pushes large cobblestones out onto the beach and to the bottom of the seafloor. The wave type here is described as fast, long sloping, and steep right, meaning the surfer must turn to the right to stay ahead of the curl. The waves break on almost every swell and the waves that break west provide the most surfable wave. These waves can be surfed from two to twelve feet, appear at medium to low tide, and takeoffs are steep. The waves break on a sandy beach with a rocky bottom. Uppers is best surfed with a shortboard (a lightweight board designed for high-performance surfing; usually five to seven feet long) or mid-length surfboard; a longboard (eight to ten feet long, used into the 1960s and revived in the 1980s) is also possible. Surfers at Uppers require an intermediate to expert level of skill.<sup>3</sup>

Lower Trestles (Lowers) is best surfed with a shortboard. Lowers offers close to perfect lines, both right and left, that peel (break fast) off a point. The waves are long, and hollow sections appear as the wave nears the sandy beach. The waves are surfable from two to six feet, steady and consistent, ideal for performance surfing. Lowers is one of ten surf breaks worldwide, including Victoria, Australia; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Jeffreys Bay, South Africa; and Teahupoo, French Polynesia, chosen for the Association of Surfing Professionals Men's World Championship Tour. Historically, Trestles has been the only one of those ten in the continental United States.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matt Warshaw, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Surfing* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt, Inc., 2003), 649.

<sup>2</sup> California Coastal Commission, *Adopted Staff Report and Recommendation of Consistency Certification*, 2008, 181.

<sup>3</sup> Bank Wright, *Surfing California: A Complete Guide to the California Coast* (Redondo Beach, CA: Mañana Publishing, 1973), 142.

<sup>4</sup> Association of Surfing Professionals, *ASP World Tour Schedule*, <http://www.aspworldtour.com/schedule/asp-world-tour-schedule/> accessed 10 February 2011.

These are high performance waves and the waves run top to bottom. The beach is a bit sparse and difficult to access with cobblestones and submerged rocks by the waterline. This site requires an intermediate to expert level of skill.<sup>5</sup>

Middles, south of Lower, draws beginner to intermediate surfers. Here the waves largely slope to the right with some lefts. This break likes west swells best. Surfers can use longboards, mid-length, or shortboards at Middles. At Middles and other surf breaks within the district, beginner and intermediate surfers may find shortboards easier to control. Both the crowds and the waves are less intense at Middles than at Lower. One noncontributing building is the Department of Parks and Recreation Lifeguard building, circa 1970, on the bluff above Middles.

Church, continuing to the south, is where beginner to intermediate surfers use longboards or mid-length boards. The name refers to the long-gone chapel once located nearby. The waves here are well-shaped and offer a slow and easy wave described as long sloping right, broken into several take-offs. Rare giant northwest swells can connect the sections for an amazing, long ride.<sup>6</sup> The second noncontributing building is the San Onofre Beach Club, a 1946 United States Marine Corps beach facility building styled after a Spanish Colonial church, in a tribute to the original chapel at this location. The building has been determined individually eligible for the National Register under Criteria A and C for the purpose of considering future rehabilitation.<sup>7</sup> The resource is not associated with historic activity in the district.

The Point is a good right break, considered to be one of the most important longboard breaks in Southern California.

Old Man's won its fame in the early history of the sport, when heavy wooden longboards demanded softer, slower waves. The site features a broad, generous, multi-tiered wave field, similar to that found at Hawaii's Waikiki Beach. Surfing in the 1930s with 100+ pound surfboards occurred at Old Man's precisely because of the similarity.

Dog Patch, where the surf is generally easy breaking, is a good area for beginners, and also best surfed with a longboard. Except for small rocks along the shore line, the area is hazard free, with a safe, clean, sandy beach. Due to its gentle waves, this is a popular location for families and novice surfers.

These surf breaks are collectively known as San Onofre, historically known among surfers as SanO and 'Nofre. San Onofre, Spanish for the Egyptian Saint Onuphrius, is mentioned as the name of a rancho of San Juan Capistrano Mission in 1828. It appears in the name of the Santa Margarita y San Onofre grant, dated February 23, 1836 and May 10, 1841, and was given to the train station when the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad built the coast line from Los Angeles to Oceanside in the late 1880s.<sup>8</sup>

San Onofre State Beach was created in 1971, containing 2,945 acres of land in three separate parcels, including 55 acres of beach and 24,000 feet of ocean frontage. The land was leased by the State of California under a 50-year agreement with the Department of the Navy. An undated *San Onofre State Beach Unit History* indicates that to "protect San Onofre State Beach from conflicting recreational uses, it was dedicated as the [California State P]ark system's first "surfing only – no swimming" beach. The only other use of the beach that was deemed as compatible, from a safety standpoint, was surf-fishing when not interfering with surfing."<sup>9</sup>

Built in 1967, the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS) south of San Onofre State Beach is jointly owned by Southern California Edison (SCE) (78.21%), San Diego Gas & Electric (20%), and the city of Riverside (1.79%). The plant contains three nuclear reactors, Units 1, 2, and 3. Units 2 and 3 are currently in use. Unit 1 was retired in 1992 after 25 years of service and is currently being decommissioned. Today, SONGS generates approximately 2,200 megawatts of power, enough to serve 1.5 million average Southern California homes at a point in time.<sup>10</sup> The combined presence of the station and the military base has protected this area from development, leaving relatively unchanged the coastline of one hundred years ago: bluffs, native vegetation, and a tidal wetland frequented by migratory birds and wild deer.

## Wave Formation

In geological terms,

<sup>5</sup> Wright, *Surfing California*, 142.

<sup>6</sup> "San Diego Surfing," Franko's Maps website, <http://frankosmaps.com/maps/product/Frankos-Map-of-San-Diego-Surfing.html>, accessed 17 December 2010.

<sup>7</sup> Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA, Concurrence Letter with a Finding of No Adverse Effects with Conditions, September 30, 2009, Reference USMC090817A.

<sup>8</sup> Erwin G. Gudde, *California Place Names: The Origin and Etymology of Current Geographical Names* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965), 276.

<sup>9</sup> California State Parks, *San Onofre State Beach Unit History*, n.d., 20.

<sup>10</sup> "Power Generation," San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station Community website, <http://www.sce.com/PowerandEnvironment/PowerGeneration/SanOnofreNuclearGeneratingStation/>, accessed 17 December 2010.

At the mouth of San Mateo Creek, large cobbles form a fan-shaped delta on the seafloor that extends from just north of Cottons (outside the district boundary) to south of Uppers. A second fan-shaped cobble delta is found off of Lowers. The composite delta structure likely assumed its overall shape at the last glacial maximum, some 18,000 years ago, when sea level was approximately some 300 feet lower than it is today. The inland extent of the cobble delta is generally at the location of the modern day Mean Low Water, suggesting continued additions of cobble to the delta since its initial development. Oral accounts from surfers dating back to the 1950s indicate that the continuous presence of these cobbles is an important component of the high quality wave formation.<sup>11</sup>

The exact role that these cobble deltas play in creating Trestles' surf conditions is not known, although a general consensus exists that the cobble substrate is an important component of the wave formation at Trestles.

The other component that can influence wave formation is sediment transport. The volume and characteristics of sediment delivered and removed from a surf break influences the type of wave that forms. Sandbars enhance certain types of waves favored by some surfers. Sandbars help waves become steeper and more hollow, conducive to shortboard surfing. Geologists study portions of the coast within which sediment is circulated, called littoral cells, to understand how sediment moves in and out of an area of the beach. Trestles is part of the Oceanside littoral cell, which extends from Dana Point to La Jolla Point.

Sediment is added to the cell via San Juan Creek, San Mateo Creek, and bluff erosion. During large storm events, the volume of water discharged from San Mateo Creek is large enough to breach the sand spit that normally exists between the creek and the ocean. When this happens, sediment from the sand spit and from the creek is carried into the ocean. According to personal accounts by surfers, the surplus sediment never covers the cobbles because the wave energy in the surf zone prevents it from remaining there. Rather, the sediment forms temporary sandbars that extend southward from the mouth of the creek. The sandbars eventually wash away and normally do not reform until the next large storm event provides a new supply of sand.<sup>12</sup>

### **Beach Access**

In 1933 when surfers first discovered San Onofre, Matt Warshaw discovered,

It was a well-marked half-day's journey to get to San Onofre from any of Southern California's beach communities. The not-quite-finished Pacific Coast Highway still contained sections of unpaved road, and a rutted one-lane track connected the highway to a packed-dirt beachfront parking lot. "You'd go there for a long weekend," one 1930s regular recalled, "and it usually meant four flat tires." The isolation was more imagined than real; San Clemente, just five miles to the north, was already a thriving beachfront town. But San Onofre felt hidden and private.<sup>13</sup>

Those who parked along the highway, or tucked their cars into the underbrush attempting to avoid the Marines beginning in 1942, created their own paths down the bluff, or followed wildlife trails through the wetlands. Steve Pezman recalled,

Parking and access strategies changed from year to year, era to era. At first it was in the dirt median between the north and south lanes of old Hwy. 101...Later we snuck our cars out on the bluff overlooking Uppers. Later yet, we parked and walked from down by Concordia Elementary. When Cypress Shores replaced the quarter horse ranch on Cotton's [north of Trestles], another era of cat and mouse followed – conning the gate guard. Then came the freeway, then the State Park. Each presented a different challenge in accessing the pleasantly illusive surfing grounds. Finally, Trestles was thrown wide open to the public and the problem changed again, to one of too many surfers with too much access.<sup>14</sup>

Off limits to civilians from 1942 to 1971, "the Trestles surfing experience was in large part a strategic and tactical engagement with the U.S. Marines. Entry and exit routes through the marshland were plotted, surfboards were often hidden by their owners (and sometimes confiscated by the Marines), and ammunition on occasion was fired over the heads of trespassing surfers."<sup>15</sup>

When the State of California leased the original 3.5 miles of beach from the United States Marine Corps (United States Department of the Navy) to create San Onofre State Beach (later increased to five miles), there was no vehicular access to the beach, and pedestrian access was through paths leading down canyons that bisected the bluff area.<sup>16</sup> The trails to

<sup>11</sup> Philip Williams & Associates, Ltd. *Final Report: Potential Toll Road Impacts on San Mateo Creek Watershed Processes, Mouth Morphology and Trestles Surfing Area*, Prepared for the Surfrider Foundation, January 2006.

<sup>12</sup> California Coastal Commission Report, 184.

<sup>13</sup> Matt Warshaw, *The History of Surfing* (San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, LLC, 2010), 76.

<sup>14</sup> Steve Pezman, "Capers in the Key of 'T,'" in *The Surfer's Journal* Volume 7, Number 3, Fall 1998.

<sup>15</sup> Matt Warshaw, *Encyclopedia*, 649.

<sup>16</sup> "San Onofre Park To Open At Easter," *San Diego Union*, 27 March 1971, B-2.

the beach were identified as switchbacks, requiring about five minutes to walk from top to bottom, and described as “not difficult, just long. There are steeper shortcuts for the impatient.”<sup>17</sup> Vehicular access is still limited, and roads and trails are still rough, preserving the sense of isolation from the nearby freeway and suburban neighborhoods. The trail system is the noncontributing site in the district. Many of the trails originally traversed the wetlands and are no longer in use, and no longer clearly defined.

### **Railroad Trestles**

The 1880-1946 Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad trestles over San Mateo Creek and the park’s wetlands, for which Trestles is named, were determined ineligible for the National Register by Section 106 consensus December 3, 1996. The trestles are the two noncontributing structures in the historic district. Safe Trestles, a design competition to create safe, low-impact access to Trestles, was created to eliminate the danger of crossing active train tracks, restore and preserve the wetlands impacted by current paths, and encourage open and low impact access to Trestles for future generations. The winning design proposal provides a safe rail crossing and a single path over the wetlands to better protect the fragile beach ecology.

### **Integrity**

Trestles Historic District retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, feeling, and association. While surf breaks shift slightly from season to season with changes in the weather and the resulting adjustments in the cobble deltas and sediment transport, the boundaries encompass the area used during the period of significance, including access to the beach. The northernmost “trail” alongside the former Nixon Western Presidential White House property to Upper Trestles has since been paved with asphalt, in part for the protection of the surrounding marsh – the San Mateo Creek Wetlands Natural Preserve. The trail-turned-service road remains closed to unofficial vehicle traffic and is frequented by surfers traveling on foot, by bicycle, and by skateboard. Automobile access has been improved to the three southernmost breaks – The Point, Old Man’s and Dog Patch – reducing the likelihood of a flat tire. The area remains free of commercialization and development, encouraging continued use by surfers influenced by and supportive of both the physical and mental features of the San Onofre surf community.

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<sup>17</sup> Lew Scarr, “Things Are Happening At San Onofre,” *San Diego Union*, 17 July 1971, G-1.

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

**1933 – 1971**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

- 1933: First surfed
- 1935: Became one of CA's most popular surf breaks
- 1938 – 1941: Site of Pacific Coast Surf Riding Championships
- 1942 – 1971: U.S. Marine Corps occupation
- 1951 – 1971: "Postwar Period" Creation of San Onofre Surfing Club and innovative modern surfing techniques
- 1971: Became first CA State Beach dedicated to surfing

**Significant Persons**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Architect/Builder**  
N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance begins when the first surfers discovered Old Man's in 1933 and ends in 1971 when the area became part of San Onofre State Beach. Surfing had become a popular general sport by the early to mid-1960s.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

Trestles Historic District meets Criteria Consideration G: Properties That Have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years for its role in the establishment of surfing as a recreation, a lifestyle, a culture, and a part of the Southern California cultural identity.

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

Trestles Historic District is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the national level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/Recreation during the period of significance 1933 to 1971. World-renowned for its consistent, near perfect waves, Trestles provides some of the best year-round surfing waves in California, an area with the greatest concentration of surfers in the world. Local surfers began coming to Trestles in 1933, discovering a setting virtually unparalleled in Southern California due to high quality waves and the aesthetics of clean water and a still natural environment. The period of significance begins when the first surfers started surfing at Old Man's and ends in 1971 when the area became part of San Onofre State Beach. Trestles Historic District meets Criteria Consideration G: Properties That Have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years for its role in the establishment of surfing as a recreation, a lifestyle, a culture, and a part of the Southern California cultural identity. For over 70 years the district has been associated with events and activities that have played a significant role in the evolution of surfing as a sport which is an integral part of Southern California's identity as a beach culture. The district's character defining historic landscape elements – sand and cobbled beaches and consistent offshore wave breaks – have attracted pioneering local surfers since 1933, and have been the site of surfing competitions since 1938. When the Association of Surfing Professionals selected the top ten international sites for the Men's Surfing World Championship Tour, historically, Lower Trestles was the only mainland location. In California it is estimated that there are more than one million surfers who surf at a minimum of once a week. To Trestles, thousands come year round. The physical isolation and absence of commercial growth encouraged the development of a society whose lifestyle and unique culture would later personify Southern California and influence surfing worldwide.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance)

**History of Surfing in California**

The history of surfing in California really begins in Hawaii. Hawaii's surfing history dates back thousands of years. For Hawaiians surfing was a significant part of their culture and they were experts at riding waves. By Captain James Cook's explorations the western world was first introduced to the sport of surfing. European exploration brought disease and ultimately decimated the native Hawaiian population. In the early 1800s the missionaries were invoking strict Protestant standards on the Hawaiians, including forcing the Hawaiians to wear more "suitable" clothing and discouraged them from playing in the water and ultimately from surfing. The missionaries associated surfing with everything that went against Christianity.<sup>18</sup>

The United States annexed Hawaii in 1898, making it a U.S. territory. Plans to promote Hawaii as a tourist destination began as early as 1902 when W. C. Weedon worked with a group of Honolulu businessmen to advertise Hawaii on the mainland, particularly California. The result was a tourism boom. Over the next several years Hawaii continued to be a desirable vacation location for Americans. Jack London was once such a tourist and took an immediate interest in surfing. He published his first account in an article entitled "Riding the South Sea Surf" in the October 1907 edition of *A Woman's Home Companion*. In his article London described his own attempts at surfing and he encouraged others to try. Capitalizing on this was Alexander Hume Ford. Ford established the Outrigger Canoe and Surfboard Club (Outrigger) in Waikiki, the first genuine surfing organization, and one primarily directed at mainland tourists. The tourist industry was causing more and more beachfront to be developed for hotels and resorts which resulted in surfers having fewer and fewer locations to themselves. Ford's club "secured a twenty year lease on an acre of beachfront and built the grass shack that was to be the first of several" clubhouses.<sup>19</sup> This marked a rebirth of surfing in Hawaii. By 1915 the club had more than 1,000 members.

In 1907, the year the Outrigger opened and Jack London was writing of his surfing experiences, George Freeth was surfing. At the time Freeth was considered the best surfer in Waikiki. He is credited with restoring the "lost art of standing up while riding," which he did on a "solid, heavy sixteen footer" [board].<sup>20</sup> Freeth is also credited with introducing surfing to Southern California firsthand – the same year the Outrigger opened. Henry E. Huntington heard about Freeth's skills and invited him to showcase his talents as part of a promotional event for the newly created Los Angeles-Redondo Beach rail service. Freeth came to Redondo Beach in 1907. The "Father of Modern Surfing," Hawaiian Duke Kahanamoku, came to

<sup>18</sup> Drew Kampion, *Stoked: A History of Surf Culture*. (Santa Monica: General Publishing Group, Inc., 1997), 30, 32, 33; Timothy T. DeLaVega, *200 Years of Surfing Literature: An Annotated Bibliography*, with introductions by Steve Pezman, Joel T. Smith (Hanapepe, Kauai: Hawaii, 2004), 8-9.

<sup>19</sup> Kampion, 36.

<sup>20</sup> "Surfer Shapers: George Freeth," California Surf Museum website, [http://www.surfmuseum.org/html/george\\_freeth1.html](http://www.surfmuseum.org/html/george_freeth1.html), accessed 22 August 2008.



national prominence in 1911, when he broke the American 50 and 100-yard swimming records. From 1912 to 1934, he won three gold and two silver Olympic gold medals in swimming. During this time, he almost single-handedly stimulated Americans' interest in participating in amateur swimming events and introduced Hawaiian style surfing to the U.S. mainland, Australia, and New Zealand. He is particularly credited for helping popularize surfing in Southern California by inspiring the sport's second-most influential pioneer Tom Blake to move from Detroit to Los Angeles in 1920. By the 1920s surfing was a new sport in Southern California and there were an estimated two hundred surfers in Hawaii and California.<sup>21</sup>

Until the 1930s most surfers were using large, heavy planks as boards that did not allow for maneuverability. Redwood was preferred. Early twentieth century boards averaged 80 pounds, and could weigh up to 150 pounds. This changed when Tom Blake began researching the *olo*, an ancient surfboard used only by Hawaiian chiefs, and housed at the Bishop Museum in Honolulu. Blake copied the dimensions and got to work on his own board. He built the first hollow board in 1926, reducing the weight to forty to fifty pounds.<sup>22</sup> He essentially hollowed out the board and laminated the deck and bottom with plywood. Plywood became suitable for exterior exposure when a fully waterproof adhesive was developed in 1934.<sup>23</sup> This new board was lighter and faster than any boards the surfers were using and made surfing possible for a greater number of people interested in trying the sport. Blake patented his hollow board and set up production primarily in Southern California. From 1932 to the early 1950s there were four major builders of Blake's hollow board: the Thomas Rogers Company of Venice, California, the Los Angeles Ladder Company, the Catalina Equipment Company, and Robert Mitchell of Cincinnati, Ohio. As more board manufacturers and gear shops set up business, they did so in San Clemente. Blake's hollow paddle rescue board was adopted by the Pacific Coast Lifesaving Corps, used by the Red Cross National Aquatic Schools for instruction, and is used internationally by lifeguards. In 1930, Blake built the first waterproof camera housing used for surf photography, and in 1935 wrote *Hawaiian Surfboard* (1935).<sup>24</sup> Excerpts from that were reprinted in *National Geographic*. The changes in surfboard design and the active promotion of the sport by men like Blake caused a surge in surfing. When the Great Depression hit, surfing became an inexpensive form of recreation and entertainment.<sup>25</sup>

### Surfing at San Onofre

The popularity of surfing at San Onofre coincided with the Newport Harbor jetty expansion project that destroyed the surf site at Corona del Mar. Displaced surfers made their way their way south to San Onofre in 1935.<sup>26</sup> After Freeth's death in 1919, and due in part to Kahanamoku's patronage, surfing activity had shifted from Redondo Beach further south to Newport Beach's Corona del Mar. Before the breakwater was put in, Corona del Mar was considered to be "the surfing spot" for early generation mainland surfers.<sup>27</sup> San Diego surfer Bob Sides noted good waves at San Onofre on one of his trips between San Diego and Corona del Mar, and with Lorrin "Whitey" Harrison organized a two day exploration. Harrison was one of the early *haole* mainlanders to surf Oahu's North Shore during the late 1930s. As a result of his many trips to Hawaii, Harrison did much to instill the "Waikiki Beach Lifestyle" at San Onofre.<sup>28</sup>

At the time Sides noticed San Onofre, the mainland surfing population numbered about fifty people. Harrison recalled,

...we loaded up a whole bunch of people into touring cars... and we went down there and tried it out. We went clear down to where the atomic plant is now and surfed that spot. Then we came back up the beach and tried it right where the main shack<sup>29</sup> is now. That's where we found it was always steadiest. The surf was always pretty good... We weren't the first people to go down there, people had been going fishing down there for years and stayin' all night. The ranchers [who owned the land] didn't seem to mind. In fact, the first time we went there, they were making a Hollywood movie. They had built this big palm thatch house right on the beach. We slept in it the

<sup>21</sup> "Annexation of Hawaii, 1898," U.S. Department of State website, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/gp/17661.htm>, accessed 22 August 2008; Kampion, 35-37; DeLaVega, 32; "Corporate Information," Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau website, <http://www.hvcb.org/corporate/history.htm>, accessed 22 August 2008.

<sup>22</sup> Doug Werner, *Surfer's Start-Up: A Beginner's Guide to Surfing/Second Edition*. (Chula Vista, CA: Start-Up Sports/Tracks Publishing, 1999), 97.

<sup>23</sup> "Milestones in the History of Plywood," APA – The Engineered Wood Association website, [http://www.apawood.org/level\\_b.cfm?content=srv\\_med\\_new\\_bkgd\\_plycen](http://www.apawood.org/level_b.cfm?content=srv_med_new_bkgd_plycen), accessed 7 December 2010

<sup>24</sup> "Surfing Legends – Tom Blake," California Surf Museum website, [http://www.surfmuseum.org/html/tom\\_blake.html](http://www.surfmuseum.org/html/tom_blake.html), accessed 7 December 2010.

<sup>25</sup> Kampion, 44; DeLaVega, 32-33.

<sup>26</sup> Personal communication between California Coastal Commission staff and Steve Pezman, publisher of *The Surfer's Journal*, on August 24, 2007.

<sup>27</sup> Malcolm Gault-Williams, "Early 1930s Surfing: San Onofre" on *Legendary Surfers: A Definitive History of Surfing's Culture and Heroes* at [http://files.legendarysurfers.com/surf/legends/ls08.shtml#san\\_o](http://files.legendarysurfers.com/surf/legends/ls08.shtml#san_o), accessed 7 February 2011.

<sup>28</sup> Matt Warshaw, *Encyclopedia*, 251-252, 520.

<sup>29</sup> The "main shack" refers to the structure at Old Man's; a smaller tribute shack has been constructed more recently a short distance to the south at Dog Patch.

first night we stayed there. This was about 1933/34. By 1935, Corona del Mar was over with, and San Onofre was our main spot.<sup>30</sup>

San Onofre became one of California's most popular surf breaks. The area's relatively easy automobile access along the Coast Highway contributed to it becoming "a meeting place," as long-time San Onofre regular Dorian Paskowitz later recalled. Surfers from San Diego to Santa Cruz would conduct weekend trips (later called "surfin' safaris") to San Onofre. Weekend camp-outs, Paskowitz continued, were filled with "Hawaiian guitar, Tahitian dancing and no small amount of boozing." Local surfer John "Doc" Ball's description of these trips in his seminal 1946 photo book *California Surfriders* helped to define the public's impression of the Southern California beach culture.<sup>31</sup>

A Los Angeles dentist, Ball had a tremendous influence on the growth and popularity of surfing in California, especially between the 1930s and 1950s. Organizer and founder of the Palos Verdes Surf Club in 1935, Ball's greatest contribution to the sport was helping to originate the art of "surf photography." Hundreds of his black-and-white photographs, taken from 1931 to 1941, featured all aspects of the sport. Taken from the water using a camera housed in a custom-made waterproof box, many of his photographs were published in such nationally distributed magazines as *Life*, *Look*, and *National Geographic*. *California Surfriders*, along with Doc's other photographs, were equally responsible for popularizing surfing as a way of life, as well as a sport, to a world-wide audience. His innovative photographic techniques influenced generations of noted surfing photographers including Don James and Leroy Grannis.<sup>32</sup>

Other notable surfers at San Onofre in the 1930s and 40s included Tom Blake, Gard Chapin, Tulie Clark, I.E. "Hoppy" Swarts, and Cliff Tucker. Their passion and commitment to the sport inspired them to organize and participate in a number of surfing competitions. The first of these was the Pacific Coast Surf Riding Championship, the mainland's first major surfing competition, relocated from Corona del Mar. Held nine times between 1928 and 1941, the sixth through ninth championships were held at San Onofre beginning in 1938. Four-time winner Pete Peterson was the event's dominant surfer, including the 1938 and 1941 championships at San Onofre.<sup>33</sup>

The gently rolling waves, ability to camp close by, and the beauty of the cliffs, together provided an aesthetic previously unknown. San Onofre and Trestles became the most popular spots to surf in northern San Diego County as a combined result of this aesthetic, its proximity to the original Pacific Coast Highway, and the unique consistency of the surf. Trestles' distinction derives from a variety of breaks and waves consistently available to surfers of all ages and abilities year round, attributes that helped establish surfing as recreation, lifestyle, culture, and a part of Southern California's identity.

San Onofre was one of the first places in Southern California to create its own surf culture. At San Onofre the early surfers found an abandoned grass shack, left by a Hollywood movie company as noted by Whitey Harrison, which became the center of the surf beach. These early surfers created a unique way of life for themselves and their families. They created their own island paradise like the one a few had experienced in Hawaii or most had seen promoted, paying homage to the sport's Polynesian roots. Their paradise came complete with ukuleles, grass skirts, palm frond hats, and large redwood surfboards. This was the start of a tight social community that has continued for generations. Historic photographs depict these early surfers camping at San Onofre.<sup>34</sup> San Onofre offered surfers a place where they could surf and sunbathe. There were no lifeguards, little interference from the outside world. San Onofre offered surfers a respite where they could create their own society.

Matt Warshaw identified the heart of San Onofre's significance.

But what made San Onofre unique had as much to do with what happened on the beach as what took place in the water. Before and after wave-riding events, twenty-five or so "Sano" regulars and another fifty to seventy-five fellow travelers – assorted friends, siblings, and girlfriends – came together informally into a kind of self-contained surf cooperative. There were no outside influences. No lifeguards. No performing on behalf of tourists or reporters. No carnival schedules to plan around or club rules to obey. For the first time in its modern era, the sport had a space in which it could develop on its own. Over the course of three or four hundred Depression-era weekends at San Onofre, surfing socialized itself.

<sup>30</sup> Malcolm Gault-Williams, "The Golden Age of Malibu: San Onofre, Mainland Surfing's 1<sup>st</sup> Capitol [sic]" on *Legendary Surfers: A Definitive History of Surfing's Culture and Heroes* at [http://files.legendarysurfers.com/surf/legends/ls25.shtml#san\\_o](http://files.legendarysurfers.com/surf/legends/ls25.shtml#san_o), accessed 7 February 2011.

<sup>31</sup> Warshaw, *Encyclopedia*, 520-521.

<sup>32</sup> Alex Bevil, "Sano Legends: Doc Ball," Research notes compiled November 20, 2010.

<sup>33</sup> Warshaw, *Encyclopedia*, 439-440.

<sup>34</sup> Kampion, 48-49; Oral History Interview with Steve Pezman, June 26, 2008, by Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA, California Historic Preservation Officer; Also see Don James, *Surfing San Onofre to Point Dume 1936-1942, Photographs by Don James* with introduction by C. R. Steyck (Vancouver, BC: Raincoast Books, 1996).

It was probably the sport's communal high point. Boards were placed in long informal rows just above the high tide line, while surfers hunkered down shoulder to shoulder around the firepit. Clams, halibut, bass, and abalone were brought up, cleaned and filleted, dumped into a huge cook pot, and served to all by the bowlful. Everyone threw their arms around each other and pressed together when a folding pocket camera was aimed their way. A particular surfer look took shape, borrowing heavily from Hawaii. A palm-frond hut was built in front of the San Onofre parking lot, and anyone who played guitar bought a ukulele and learned the chord progression for "My Little Grass Shack" and half a dozen other Waikiki beachboy standards. "Hawaii to us was like what heaven is for religious people," one of San Onofre's original surfers recalled. "Nobody had actually been, but we all hoped we'd get there sometime, and the next best thing was to sing about it."

The San Onofre pioneers also developed many of the protocols for what it meant to be a surfer in and out of the water. This understanding had little or nothing to do with Hawaii, and it provided much of the rough timber from which surf culture would be built. Travel was part of it, and self-reliance. There was also a grinning sidestep from the culture at large, justified in language that often wavered between honorable and fatuous. "You've got to keep away from things you don't like," San Onofre original Whitey Harrison said. "I just live to ride waves and enjoy myself." Not counting food-fights and the occasionally beery night out, the San Onofre gang didn't act especially defiant or unruly – that was a job for Eisenhower-era surfers. But they were the first to imbue the sport with the pride and knowingness of an exclusive secret society.<sup>35</sup>

As America became enveloped by World War II, surfing at Trestles and San Onofre was challenged by the area's new owner, the United States Marine Corps. San Onofre's beaches became part of the Camp Pendleton training facility and were declared off-limits to civilians.

Established in 1942, Camp Pendleton was purchased to support build up and training Marines for combat operations in the Pacific theatre. The Base has since continuously hosted a large portion of Marine Corps' units stationed on the west coast of the United States. These units have conducted a variety of military training exercises, which have varied in intensity and frequency with changing national defense policies and current events, necessary to achieve and sustain Marine Corps responsibilities as mandated by U.S.C. Title X [*United States Code or Code of Laws of the United States of America*, Title X pertaining to the Armed Forces].

During World War II, Camp Pendleton's beaches witnessed a myriad of units and amphibious craft and ships, including the Higgins boat being offloaded from Liberty ships, the Landing Ship Tank (LST) scuttling itself on Green Beach to disembark its supplies, and the Landing Vehicle Tracked (LVT) coming ashore with Marines to take their objective. This was no different during the Korean Conflict when the beaches saw Marines preparing for their landing at Inchon. During the Vietnam War, the Marine Corps maintained its proficiency in the techniques and procedures of amphibious warfare by using the Dock Landing Ships (LSDs) and LVTs, and incorporating an increasing role of military aircraft, especially rotary-wing aircraft, into amphibious operations. In recent years, the beaches, to include Green Beach, witnessed preparation for the possible amphibious landing in support of Operation Desert Storm, with Marine units disembarking Amphibious Transport Ships in Amphibious Assault Vehicles (AAVs) and Landing Crafts Air Cushion (LCACs).

Surfing continued through the war years, with increased tension between surfers and Marines over access. In 1952 the San Onofre Surfing Club was created and leased a 2,500-foot strip of beach from Camp Pendleton for \$1 a year. In response, the Marine Corps tentatively allowed club members to surf off San Onofre Beach.

The Base Directory of 1967 and 1968 included information about San Onofre Beach. A portion of the beach was dedicated to surfing, and civilian members of the San Onofre Surfing Club were allowed access.

South of the San Onofre Beach Recreation Center, 25,000 feet of beach has been reserved for surfing. All military personnel, both active duty and retired, their dependents and guests and bona fide club members of the civilian organization, The San Onofre Surfing Club, may use the area.<sup>36</sup>

In 1970 the club acquired an additional 1,000 feet of beach adjacent to its original lease.<sup>37</sup> Barney Wilkes led the drive to establish the club, with others who surfed these spots in their twenties and thirties. Its primary objective was to maintain a primitive style of surfing and the spirit of this area when it was first surfed in the 1930s.

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<sup>35</sup> Warshaw, *History*, 80-81.

<sup>36</sup> San Onofre Beach, USMC Base Camp Pendleton Directory 1967, 1968, 25.

<sup>37</sup> San Onofre State Beach Unit History, 15.

These surfers created a strong social organization, exclusive to San Onofre. There was a culture of families where people could bring their children and teach them to surf and experience surfing together. The emphasis was not always on the surfing, but on the experience and the culture at San Onofre. "It's just a giant family," declared Bill Vetter, one of San Onofre Surfing Club's elder statesmen, talking about SanO's tradition that carries to present day. Since the 1930s, camaraderie has been the mainstay at 'Nofre, "even before the San Onofre Surfing Club was founded," wrote Andrew Cowell. "For this extended family, communication is paramount, activism a must, stewardship of the land and sea a responsibility, and fun and recreation the first order of each day."<sup>38</sup>

### **WOW: Women on Waves**

Women have surfed alongside men for centuries, as evidenced by woodcut artwork, before Gidget came on the scene in the 1950s. In 2010-2011, the California Surf Museum presented "WOW Women on Waves: Performance, Beach Fashion, and Feminine Mystique in the World of Surfing."

From the Hawaiian surfing Queens to the freshly crowned champions of the women's pro tour, Women On Waves celebrated more than 300 years of women's standout performances in surfing. At the same time Women On Waves chronicled the beach fashions women endured or created, the milestones they accomplished, and the often-overlooked influence feminine mystique has had on wave-riding. The exhibit's compilation of swimwear not only traced the styles in women's attire, but documented the evolution of freedom and achievement attained over the last century as well. Although no exhibition can provide a complete history, Women On Waves documented the highlights of women's contributions to surf culture—from a feminine perspective to inform and entertain all visitors.<sup>39</sup>

San Onofre received a direct mention in the opening panels of the exhibit, 1700s to 1940s PRE-CONTACT to POST-WAR Death, Resurrection and Expansion for the Sport of Queens.

The care-free Hawaiian culture was an intoxicating elixir to western women yearning to break free from constricting corsets and stifling status quo. It unleashed a powerful yet easy opportunity to expand athleticism, adventure and attitude in a new exciting way. Swimsuits went from wool to wow, and despite the resistance of society's conservatives, surfing was irresistible. If a women's place was in the home, the audacious women of this era found themselves most at home in the inviting waves of San Onofre and Waikiki.<sup>40</sup>

Three women in particular were part of the San Onofre surfing scene from its 1930s beginnings to the present: Mary Ann Hawkins, Donna Matson, and Linda Benson.

Mary Ann Hawkins was one of the San Onofre pioneers in the 1930s. She "was a talented swimmer with Olympic-level skills, but a vision of Duke Kahanamoku detoured Mary Ann to become California's first great 20<sup>th</sup>-century water woman."<sup>41</sup>

"I was about 10 when I saw Duke in the pool in Pasadena," Hawkins said. "He was this big, beautiful Hawaiian man, making bubbling noises with his mouth and making everyone laugh. Duke would have been around 33. He fascinated me and I'll never forget the first time I saw him."

Born in Pasadena in 1919, Mary Ann was a sickly child, so her parents enrolled her in a YWCA swim program. By the age of 10, Mary Ann was winning trophies for swimming and diving with the Pasadena Swimming Club. At 15, she set a new record for the SPAAU 880-yard freestyle and became the Junior National Half-Mile Open Champion. In 1934 her family bought a home in Costa Mesa, near Newport Beach and Corona del Mar, gathering spots for early California boardriders.

"The first surfers I saw at the Corona del Mar jetty were Gene 'Tarzan' Smith, Lorrin 'Whitey' Harrison and Preston 'Pete' Peterson— all great surfers. I fell so in love with surfing and bodysurfing, I never really swam my best from that time on." Between 1935 and 1941, Mary Ann won every surfing and paddling event she entered. She won the Pacific Coast Women's Surfboard Championships in 1938, 1939, and 1940. *Life* and *Argosy* magazines featured her girl-next-door good looks in articles, which in turn opened doors in Hollywood. She doubled for Esther Williams and other female stars, and broke her ankle jumping from a burning haystack for Shirley Jones in *Oklahoma*.

<sup>38</sup> Gault-Williams, "Early 1930s Surfing: San Onofre."

<sup>39</sup> "California Surf Museum Presents WOW Women on Waves," California Surf Museum website at <http://www.surfmuseum.org/currentexhibitions.htm>, accessed 14 March 2011.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> California Surf Museum, "20<sup>th</sup>-Century Water Woman Mary Ann Hawkins Becomes California's First Surfing Superstar" from WOW: Women on Waves exhibit, March 2010 – February 2011.

Like all surfers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century [who could afford to], Mary Ann Hawkins went back and forth from California to Hawaii. She moved to Hawaii permanently in 1956, and was hired at Waikiki's Hawaiian Village to create a star-studded water show. Hawkins believed that all humans have an affinity for the water, and she began teaching swimming to infants. Many of Hawaii's great water men learned to swim with Mary Ann Hawkins and she remains a well-loved figure in the surfing world.

California's greatest all-around water woman, Mary Ann Hawkins Midkiff passed away in 1993 at the age of 73.<sup>42</sup>

Donna Matson took advantage of the World War II era transformation that afforded greater numbers of self-assured women the opportunity to experience the freedom of travel, and of surfing. This "bold, self-confident set of females explored the changing moral codes and pushed the envelope of acceptable behavior while demanding boards that revolutionized the surfing world. A new rising swell was sweeping into the country's landscape. In the coming decade it would transform the culture of surfing - and of America itself. And these trailblazing women wave riders would pave the way."<sup>43</sup>

Native Californian Donna Matson didn't consider herself to be a good surfer, she "just liked it." Donna surfed all over the world, including in Hawaii when it was still a territory. In the mid 1950s, when she was in South Africa, she saw the waves at Jeffrey's Bay and asked some locals if there was a place she could rent a board. They pointed to the nets way out in the ocean and told her there were sharks out there, and no one would rent her a board. However, a couple of the guys took Donna out tandem because they wouldn't let her surf alone.

Donna taught elementary school worldwide, and traveled extensively in Africa, South America, Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. She hiked and snow-skied on five continents. She has been a research diver in most of the world's oceans. She was the first American woman to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro, and spent eight months lugging heavy camera gear around to do a story on Machu Picchu in Peru.

Her experience as a writer, lecturer, teacher, filmmaker and photographer came into full fruition forty years ago when she founded Western Instructional Television, which became her full-time career. Now she is content to see the sights of America and spends each summer on her sailboat at Catalina Island, enjoying dolphins, whales, and pelicans.<sup>44</sup>

Linda Benson was the first great female surf star of the 1960s, the decade of greatest change in the twentieth century. "As the world turned upside down in the tumultuous upheaval of the sixties, surfing rode the cutting edge of a cultural sea change in society. And women, for the first time, were a driving force."<sup>45</sup>

In the 1960s, Dewey Weber was known as the Little Man on Wheels for his fast-moving, hot-dog surfing. The same title could be bestowed on Linda Benson — a tiny surfer girl from Encinitas, CA who hit the water running in 1959 and became the first female surf star of the 1960s. Born in 1944, Benson grew up in Moonlight Beach, CA when it was a paradise of warm sand, gentle surf and uncrowded waves. "When I was 11 I used to stand on the cliffs above the beach and watch my older brother Charlie surf with his friends," Benson said. "I thought it was the neatest thing I'd ever seen."

At 12, Benson's father bought her a waterlogged 8'6" balsawood board for \$20. She took to it fast and in three years Benson won the first U.S. Championships held at Huntington Beach. Dale Velzy sponsored her one-way to Hawaii, where she followed in the footsteps of her heroine Marge Calhoun and won the Makaha Championships in 5-foot, hot dog surf. To prove that she could handle the big stuff, Benson became the first woman to surf Waimea Bay. "It wasn't a huge day by Waimea standards. Some of the waves were breaking around 18 feet. I can remember the steepness, the speed of the wave and the spray of water on my face from the wind. It nearly blinds you. I felt the drop and hoped I could stay on. The wave was maybe 15 feet."

During the 10 years following her win at Makaha, Linda went on to win four additional U.S. Championships, in 1960, '61, '64 and '68. In 1965, Benson took a job as a flight attendant with United Airlines — a nearly perfect

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> "California Surf Museum Presents WOW Women on Waves."

<sup>44</sup> California Surf Museum, "World Adventurer Surfer Climbs Mt. Kilimanjaro" from WOW: Women on Waves exhibit, March 2010 – February 2011.

<sup>45</sup> "California Surf Museum Presents WOW Women on Waves."

choice for her. After 38 years in a career that afforded her the opportunity to surf all over the globe, surfing remains her favorite pastime.<sup>46</sup>

### Board Technology

Good surfing is about controlling one's speed relative to the breaking wave. As waves increase in size they increase in speed; the bigger the wave, the faster it is moving. World War II introduced new materials that surfers quickly realized could be adapted to the design and construction of surfboards. While much of the innovation was done at Malibu in the late 1940s and gained acceptance and production in the 1950s, it was the bigger and faster wave action at Trestles that both drove the developments in part, and benefited from them. The surf breaks at Uppers and Lower were extremely challenging with the slower, more solid equipment of the 1930s and 1940s. Early surfers who tried the area were frequently unable to stay ahead of the waves. Innovations in surfboard design allowed surfing at Uppers and Lower, where waves are faster and require more maneuverable surfboards. Shorter boards made of fiberglass and with deep fins on the boards permitted surfers the maneuverability to surf at Upper and Lower. Lighter boards pressed more lightly on the water, creating less drag on the water's surface, and permitted the board and rider to move faster, and stay on top of faster waves.

During the summer of 1951, teenage surfers Miki Dora and Phil Edwards were among the first to successfully surf the "too quick" waves at Trestles with those faster, lighter boards. Each a talented surfer in his own right, they responded to the challenge offered by the other, and the white water that had defeated older, slower surfers on their heavier "planks." Years later Steve Pezman recalled,

The "too quick" part attracted them. So the two walked up to the distant point [about a mile from San Onofre], carrying their forty-pound balsa chips on their heads. There they discovered the waves to be quite suitable for the kind of surfing they had in mind. It is said by some, that while the two conducted a sort of impromptu, mano-a-mano, radical maneuver duel to constantly top each other in the snappy curls at Lower (then known as Middle Trestles), which they had completely to themselves every day, that the two youngsters invented most of what is now done on a modern surfboard during that summer. One of them, much later in life, was said to have commented that for him, it was all down hill after that.<sup>47</sup>

Credited as the greatest surfer of his generation, "power surfer" Phil Edwards was one of the more innovative of the second wave of Southern California surfers. From the late 1950s to mid 1960s, Edwards, along with his friend Miki Dora, created the technique, image, and language for surfing in America and the rest of the world. Dora helped set new performance standards during the 1950s and 1960s. While only four years older than his good friend and sometimes surfing rival Edwards, Dora is credited for influencing Edwards while surfing together that summer at San Onofre. Strong, with an aggressive surfing style, Dora was remarkably light on his feet, earning him the nickname "Da Cat."

The advances in surfing equipment during the 1950s, developing shorter and lighter boards, created the building blocks of modern surfing, and helped propel surfing to a much larger audience. Changes in shape and weight improved performance. Over the course of the twentieth century, average board weight dropped from about 80 pounds to six pounds.<sup>48</sup> On a longboard, speed is controlled by walking up and down the length of the board. Shortboards allow the surfer to stand in one spot, and maneuver by shifting weight. Shortboards are more maneuverable than longboards because they're lighter, thinner and have a tighter turn radius.<sup>49</sup> With innovation and mass production, boards became more affordable than ever before, further fueling a tremendous surge in surfing's popularity.

Trestles became a surf mecca, drawing surfers from all over the state to its shores. The creation of San Onofre State Beach in the early 1970s brought highly publicized surf contests to Trestles, which served to raise its profile even further, and Trestles began to be known around the world as one of the sites of California's best waves. Surfing is now a multi-billion dollar industry, California one of its most important centers and Trestles one of the image engines for that industry.<sup>50</sup>

The exclusiveness of San Onofre and Trestles ended when it became part of a California State Park. The isolation and social community that early surfers felt disappeared. The site was no longer open for a select few and thousands of visitors came, and continue to come, to surf at Trestles. Today it is the site of state and world competitions. The major surfing

<sup>46</sup> California Surf Museum, "Surfing Waimea at 15 on a Borrowed Board Linda Benson Was the First Great Surf Star of the 1960s" from WOW: Women on Waves exhibit, March 2010 – February 2011.

<sup>47</sup> Pezman, "Capers in the Key of 'T.'"

<sup>48</sup> Matt Warshaw, *Surfer Magazine SurfRiders: In Search of the Perfect Wave* (Del Mar, CA: Tehabi Books, Inc., 1997), 86.

<sup>49</sup> Doug Werner, *Surfer's Start-Up: A Beginner's Guide to Surfing/Second Edition* (Chula Vista, CA: Start-Up Sports/Tracks Publishing, 1999), 88.

<sup>50</sup> Personal communication between Commission staff and Steve Pezman, publisher of *The Surfer's Journal*, on August 24, 2007.

competitions at Trestles are the Nike 6.0 Lowers Pro (May), Surfing America USA Championships (June), and Hurley Pro (September). During these events, the old Pacific Coast Highway, used as a parking area, can accommodate up to 500 cars. While California State Parks permits the events and provides a shuttle bus that takes spectators to the beach, a long term goal is reduced attendance – asking sponsors to host webcasts or alternative ways for people to spectate.<sup>51</sup>

The Nike 6.0 Lowers Pro has evolved into one of the most coveted prizes in mainland competitive surfing. It serves as a qualifying event for the Association of Surfing Professionals (ASP) World Tour. For many years, the Hurley Pro was the only mainland U.S. event on the ten-stop ASP World Tour. For 2011 ASP has added the Quiksilver Pro in Long Beach, NY. The National Scholastic Surfing Association Championships have been held at Lower Trestles since 1992. The 2009 ASP Men's World Longboard Championships were held at Trestles, and in 2010, the seventh annual Surfing America USA Championship amateur contest was held at Trestles for the first time. "It's exciting to see the State of California recognize the country's best young surfers this way—and very appropriate to connect this with the USA Championships at Lower Trestles in San Onofre State Beach," said Mike Gerard, Surfing America's executive director. "Lower Trestles is arguably the best surf break in the mainland United States—and without California State Parks there to protect, preserve and manage this valuable resource, it would not be what it is today for surfers everywhere."<sup>52</sup>

### Surfing Culture

After the movie "Gidget" was released in April 1959, adapted from the novel of the same name based on a teenage girl's surfing experience, a nine-year surf explosion followed. Matt Warshaw observed,

While wave-riding itself became more popular, the boom was mostly a cultural phenomenon, one that spread into the near and far reaches of teenage consumerism. Tens of thousands of young people slow-danced to "Surfer Girl" and thronged the local Bijou to see *Ride the Wild Surf*; they shopped at May Company and bought nylon competition-strip trunks from the McGregor Surfer Collection, Hang Ten sneakers, and Cutex "Wipe Out Pink" toenail polish. Coppertone and Jantzen rolled out surf-theme ad campaigns – no surprise there. A ubiquitous Hamm's Beer billboard showed Rusty Miller jamming down the face at Sunset Beach. Pepsi did surf ads. So did Triumph, Mobile, Chevy, and Dewar's. It didn't matter if you were a few state lines removed from the coast, the boom was inescapable. As the *Saturday Evening Post* put it in 1967, surfing was "the most successful California export since the orange."<sup>53</sup>

Many of the early Beach Boys' songs were about surfing, both reflecting and contributing to its growing popularity. Dennis Wilson was the only band member who actually surfed.<sup>54</sup> See Continuation Sheet Additional Documentation Pages 2 and 3 for the lyrics to the Beach Boys' 1963 release "Surfin' USA" and the list of surfing sites referenced in the song, including Trestles and San Onofre.

Born in 1945, author, columnist, and television journalist Bill Geist grew up in Illinois when surfing became nationally popular in part due to "Surfin' USA." While surfers required an ocean, anyone could sport surfer-wear. Stores that previously carried only white Converse high tops added low-cut black "Connies," popularized by surfers. Long blond hair was seen on both genders, and a few people with West Coast connections sported the baggy shorts. Midwesterners seemed to draw the line at huarache sandals however. There was an awareness of something going on in California, "exciting, rebellious, even a tad revolutionary," somewhat foreign to those aspiring "to successful white collar jobs, modern ranch homes, attractive spouses, and Buicks." Geist described his meeting with seventy-six year old life-long surfer Dorian "Doc" Paskowitz of San Onofre as "something of a cross-cultural, foreign-exchange experience."<sup>55</sup>

The photography of LeRoy Grannis, especially from 1960 to 1965, "caught surfing at a critical juncture between cult and culture. Upon first glance, his photos may evoke nostalgia for a simpler, more naive era, but closer inspection reveals that he was documenting surfing's rapid evolution into an iconic lifestyle. His photos captured the real thing, providing a bridge between the world of Beach Boy lyrics and the reality of the Southern California beach scene. Surf language, surf music,

<sup>51</sup> "Safe Trestles/Phase 2," Open Architecture Network website, <http://openarchitecturenetwork.org/competitions/trestles/faq/phase2> accessed 23 December 2010.

<sup>52</sup> "Trestles hosts Surfing America contest finals," Diego Action Sports website, <http://diegoactionsports.com/tag/san-onofre>, accessed 7 December 2010.

<sup>53</sup> Warshaw, *History*, 187.

<sup>54</sup> "Surfin' USA by The Beach Boys," Songfacts website at <http://www.songfacts.com/detail.php?id=1244>, accessed 23 December 2010.

<sup>55</sup> Bill Geist, *Way Off the Road: Discovering the Peculiar Charms of Small-Town America* (New York: Broadway Books, 2007), 170-178.

surf art, surf media, surf fashion - all the basic elements of what are now considered essential to modern surf culture were either conceived or codified within this brief window of time.”<sup>56</sup>

Matt Warshaw of *Surfer Magazine* discerned, “The international success of Bruce Brown’s *The Endless Summer*, in 1966 and 1967, was irrefutable proof that the mainstream could, under the right circumstances, pay attention to real surfing...”<sup>57</sup>

Details on this film and others that increased surfing’s popularity, and influenced the public perception of surfing, include:

*The Endless Summer: The Search for the Perfect Wave*, 1966 (Bruce Brown, Director and Writer)

*Endless Summer II*, 1994 (Bruce Brown, Director; Bruce Brown, Dana Brown, Writers)

*Liquid Stage: The Lure of Surfing*, 1996 (Michael Bovee, Director; Robert Greaves, Writer)

*Endless Summer Revisited*, 2000 (Dana Brown, Director and Writer)

*Billabong Odyssey*, 2003 (Philip Boston, Director)

*Riding Giants*, 2004 (Stacy Peralta, Director; Stacy Peralta, Sam George, Writers; Documentary featuring Laird Hamilton, Greg Noll, Jeff Clark)

### Transition

At least as early as 1968 California State Parks was in discussion with the Marine Corps to acquire San Onofre Beach as a state park. After then-President Richard Nixon took up part-time residence nearby, he ordered a portion of the beach released from Camp Pendleton for public use. Nixon purchased the former Hamilton Cotton estate in San Clemente just to the north of the beach in 1969. He referred to it as “La Casa Pacifica,” meaning “Pacific House” or “House of Peace,” but the press soon dubbed it the “Western White House” which it remained for the duration of his presidency. The private home served as the Nixons’ retreat from the nation’s capital. After Nixon’s resignation, he wrote his memoirs at Casa Pacifica in the 1970s, and today the house remains in private hands.

Trestles Historic District as part of San Onofre State Beach became part of the California State Park system in 1971. Nixon’s press statement included,

“[W]e must seek to leave a legacy that goes beyond good housing, vital industries and strong defense. We must also provide an endowment of park lands and recreational areas that will enrich [Americans’] leisure opportunities and make the beauties of the earth and sea more accessible to them. As an important step toward creating such a legacy for the people of Southern California, I am pleased to announce today that fully one-third of the beach front area within Camp Pendleton will soon be made available for the use by the general public.”<sup>58</sup>

While Nixon intended for the “...miles of the best beach in the world” to be given to the State of California, the present agreement is in the form of a 50-year lease. At the April 3, 1971 dedication of the initial three-and-a-half mile beachfront (later extended to five miles), California’s parks and recreation director William Penn Mott Jr. identified the property as within one hour’s driving time of 11 million people. He read a letter from then-Governor Reagan, whose press statement noted,

“This is a momentous and proud day for California – it is the culmination of many months of dedicated effort by many people to enhance and preserve California’s grandeur and beauty. I firmly believe one of the greatest legacies we can leave to future generations is the heritage of our land, but unless we can preserve and protect the unspoiled areas which God has given us, we will have nothing to leave them. This expanse of acreage, San Onofre Bluffs State Beach, now has its future guaranteed as an official state park. However, its preservation still remains with those who use the park. As stewards of this land, we must use it judiciously and with a great sense of responsibility.”<sup>59</sup>

Mott expressed appreciation and commitment to preservation of the beach,

“This beach [San Onofre Bluffs State Beach], along with the additional beach and upland offered by the President, represents the finest beach in one continuous stretch in the United States, and we intend to exercise the same outstanding stewardship of this land as we have in the redwoods and other areas entrusted to this department.”

<sup>56</sup> Surfing’s golden age” by Steve Barilotti, excerpt from the book *LeRoy Grannis, Surf Photography* on Taschen website, page 4, [http://www.taschen.com/pages/en/catalogue/photography/reading\\_room/157.surfings\\_golden\\_age.4.htm](http://www.taschen.com/pages/en/catalogue/photography/reading_room/157.surfings_golden_age.4.htm), accessed 23 December 2010.

<sup>57</sup> Matt Warshaw, *Surfer Magazine SurfRiders: In Search of the Perfect Wave* (Del Mar, CA: Tehabi Books, Inc., 1997), 124.

<sup>58</sup> President Richard Nixon, *Press Statement*, March 31, 1971.

<sup>59</sup> Governor Ronald Reagan, *Press Statement*, April 3, 1971.



"We are very grateful to the President of the United States for the leadership he has displayed in making this marvelous beach and backup land available to the Department of Parks and Recreation of the State of California. We are also grateful to the Marine Corps for their cooperation and the fact that they have preserved this outstanding beach. The Department recognizes its trustee responsibility to the people of California, as well as to the nation. It is our plan to preserve the beach and area west of the highway in its natural condition, placing the camping development east of the highway in the 3400 acre parcel."<sup>60</sup>

In July 1971, the state announced plans to designate part of the area as California's first public beach zoned exclusively for surfing.<sup>61</sup>

### Conclusion

Trestles Historic District is significant for its uniqueness and the consistency of the waves, and for its association with surfing history in California. It has played a role in the development of new equipment, new style, and the popularization of surfing as a recreational sport. During its golden age Trestles was at the center of the evolution of surfing techniques and style, influenced equipment innovation, and provided surfers with a sense of community and place. Generations of surfers still enjoy Trestles and San Onofre. Over the years, local, national, and internationally renowned surfers have all but enshrined San Onofre Beach as a "warm, nostalgic, easygoing family-style surf break," much like Hawaii's Waikiki Beach. The culture focused on the recreation and the philosophy of how to live. As members of an informal community, surfers and their fellow travelers learned and shared surfing techniques, jargon, dress, and an attitude that, through the popular press, film, and television, fostered the world's conception of the Southern California beach lifestyle. An unnamed San Onofre Surfing Club member put it best in 1961, "This [surfing] is our life. All the days in-between are bare existence." The palm-frond "surf shack" in front of the main surf break became a local icon, as did the San Onofre Surfing Club's yearly automobile parking decal. San Onofre became the first California State Beach dedicated to promoting its surfing heritage in 1973. With greater public access and popularity San Onofre Beach is now the scene of international surfing championships.

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### Developmental history/additional historic context information

#### Golden Age

The Golden Age of surfing depends on the generation and location. The "golden years" at San Onofre are generally considered by "Nofre" veterans to have been between 1936 and 1943, when the area was owned by Rancho Santa Margarita and leased as a fishing camp.<sup>62</sup> The "golden age of surfing in California in the late '50s and '60s" was referenced in a San Diego radio interview with Duke Boyd, co-founder of the Hang Ten Clothing Line and Jim Kempton, President of the California Surf Museum.<sup>63</sup> Nationally, Ben Marcus identified the golden years as those following World War II up to the popular culture explosion attributed to the movie "Gidget" released in 1959.<sup>64</sup>

#### San Clemente

By the late 1940s, when overnight camping was no longer possible due to the Marine Corps restrictions, surfers began to spend more downtime in San Clemente and camped at Calafia Beach (called "the hole"), the current location of San Clemente State Park. Trestles is a source of local pride, as well as income, for the residents of San Clemente. The city's identity is inextricably linked to the development and culture of surfing. San Clemente is the surfing media capital of the entire world home to all of the leading industry publications, and it has a large concentration of surfboard shapers and manufacturers. A 2007 study indicated the annual economic impact to the City of San Clemente from surfers visiting Trestles ranged from \$8 million to \$13 million per year.<sup>65</sup> During the many competitions all of the hotels sell out and the other commercial establishments do a brisk business.

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<sup>60</sup> William Mott, Jr., Director of Parks and Recreation, State of California, *Press Statement*, April 13, 1971.

<sup>61</sup> Lew Scarr, "Things Are Happening At San Onofre."

<sup>62</sup> Gault-Williams, "Early 1930s Surfing: San Onofre."

<sup>63</sup> "Hang Ten Founder Talks Surfing in 1960s, Evolution of Industry" at <http://www.kpbs.org/news/2009/sep/30/hang-ten-founder-talks-surfing-1960s-evolution-ind/>, accessed 10 February 2011.

<sup>64</sup> Ben Marcus, Chapter 3: "The Golden Years: From the Fall of Hitler to the Rise of Gidget, 1946 to 1959" in *Surfing USA! An Illustrated History of the Coolest Sport of All Time* (Stillwater, MN: Voyageur Press, 2005).

<sup>65</sup> Chad Nelsen, Doctoral Candidate, UCLA Environmental Science and Engineering Program, *The Economic Impact of Surfers Visiting Trestles to the City of San Clemente*, Memo to the California Coastal Commission, September 12, 2007.

### Present Day Usage

The surf breaks nominated for designation as the Trestles Historic District (THD) break within the Camp Pendleton Assault Amphibious Vehicle Area (CPAAVA). In 1975, Camp Pendleton officially designated the northern portion of its coastline as Green Beach.<sup>66</sup> Green Beach, along with Camp Pendleton's Red, White, and Blue Beaches, have had an enduring legacy of providing critical venues to support amphibious assaults, amphibious raids, sustainment of forces ashore through ship-to-shore movement of personnel and materiel, and several other training scenarios.<sup>67</sup> The number and breadth of amphibious landing zones at Camp Pendleton are necessary to afford military commanders the flexibility to conduct realistic training and to accommodate large scale training exercises.

Currently, Camp Pendleton hosts the I Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) Command Element and the predominance of I MEF units, which include three Marine Expeditionary Units. As with past Marine Corps units stationed at Camp Pendleton, I MEF is required, now and for the foreseeable future, to maintain proficiency with amphibious operations and amphibious related operations through training on Camp Pendleton and Camp Pendleton's beaches in support of national defense. Training activities in the littoral region include, among many, amphibious assaults, amphibious raids, amphibious demonstrations, amphibious withdrawals, tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel, noncombatant evacuation operations, humanitarian assistance/disaster relief operations, peacekeeping operations, airfield/seaport seizure, and military operations in urban terrain.<sup>68</sup> Recent and planned projects on Camp Pendleton to sustain the military training endeavor have included the widening of the corridor beneath Interstate 5 and the railway at Green Beach to support increased military traffic and larger military vehicles and the conversion of agricultural fields east of San Mateo Creek to provide additional inland amphibious military objectives and maneuver areas.<sup>69</sup>

Over the years, Marine Corps use of the CPAAVA and operations at and over Green Beach have occurred coincidental with the surfing activities described herein, except as noted previously in the nomination. The Marine Corps must retain the flexibility to use its coastal and offshore amphibious training areas without constraints. To that end, designation of the Trestles Surf Break as THD does not and will not impose any additional requirements for consultation for military training and operational use. Nor does or will it impose any additional restrictions on current or future military training activities, such as those described in the historic and present day use sections of this nomination.<sup>70</sup> A future determination by the Marine Corps that its military training activities and/or operations are adversely affected by the THD will constitute valid justification for the Marine Corps to request removal of the THD from the National Register of Historic Places; the CA SHPO and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) will support such request.<sup>71</sup>

### Surfing Numbers

The population of surfers who surf once a week or more throughout the year in California is estimated to number at least one million, with occasional or seasonal surfers perhaps tripling that total. Per the San Onofre Foundation, San Onofre State Beach is among the top five most visited State Parks in California, with annual attendance exceeding 2 million. The number of surfers that travel to Trestles each year has steadily increased since record keeping began in the early 1990s. There were more than 367,000 visitors to Trestles in 2006, the vast majority of whom came to surf. Trestles was projected to host 400,000 visitors/surfers in 2007.<sup>72</sup>

Hundreds of surfers flock to Trestles daily. There are typically between four and five turn-overs (from pre-dawn to dark) in the population at each break during the day, with surfers arriving and leaving so that at any given time there are about 150 surfers in the water at Trestles during the summer. On winter swell angles there are more surf breaks at peak quality from which to choose and Trestles hosts about two-thirds of the normal summer crowd.<sup>73</sup>

There are more than one million surfers in California and Trestles is surfed by hundreds of people on a daily basis. Compared to other recreational activities such as fishing, boating, or scuba diving, surfing is a much more economically feasible option for both visitors and residents. Most other recreational activities require the purchase or renting of expensive equipment and a specific time frame in which the recreation can take place. Surfing is free, requires minimal equipment, and its time frame is dependent only on the presence of waves suited for an individual's skill level. Many

<sup>66</sup> Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton (MCB CPEN) Range Complex Management Plan (RCMP), 2008.

<sup>67</sup> A Chronology of the United States Marine Corps 1947-1964, Volume III, 1971.

<sup>68</sup> Operational Training Ranges Required Capabilities (MCRP 3-0C).

<sup>69</sup> US Army Corps of Engineers, "Range Identification and Preliminary Range Assessment" for MCB CPEN, 1998.

<sup>70</sup> CA SHPO and USMC, Marine Corps Installations West and MCB CPEN, communications on September 28, 2011 and November 8, 2011.

<sup>71</sup> CA SHPO and USMC, Marine Corps Installations West and MCB CPEN, communications on January 27 and 30, 2012.

<sup>72</sup> California Coastal Commission *Report*, 185.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

people surf multiple times a day or spend the whole day at the beach and surf. Surfing at Trestles is the epitome of a low-cost coastal recreational resource.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> California Coastal Commission *Report*, 181.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been Requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: Surfrider Foundation

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Approximately 350, land only  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>11</u>	<u>445 125</u>	<u>3694 710</u>	3	<u>11</u>	<u>447 485</u>	<u>3691 930</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>11</u>	<u>448 070</u>	<u>3692 660</u>	4	<u>11</u>	<u>444 275</u>	<u>3693 740</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (describe the boundaries of the property)

2.25 miles north-south along the coast runs from the Upper Trestles surf break immediately south of former President Nixon’s Western White House south to the Dog Patch surf break at the corner of the fence enclosing the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS). The eastern boundary is the fence line between Old Highway 101 also known as Old Pacific Highway, and the San Diego Freeway (Interstate Highway 5), from postmile 71.984 at its most northern point to postmile 69.734 on the southbound side of I-5; the southern boundary ends at the metal security fence enclosing the SONGS property atop the bluff and extends in a direct line through a vertical wash down the bluff perpendicular to the beach out into the surf; the western boundary parallels the coastline 500 meters (1640 feet) seaward from the mean high tide line; the northern boundary line follows one of the original surfers’ trails (now paved) from the Old Pacific Highway bridge over the marsh, immediately south of and alongside the fenced former Nixon property, passing under the railroad trestle, across the beach and into the surf, inside the San Diego County line.

**Boundary Justification** (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The seven surf breaks, beach, and access trails to them are in San Diego County within the boundaries of San Onofre State Beach, operated by California State Parks on land leased from the United States Department of the Navy. The district boundary encompasses access via trail and beach into the ocean to approximately where the surf breaks.

**11. Form Prepared By**

Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA, State Historic Preservation Officer 2004-2012

name/title Amy H. Crain, State Historian II

organization California State Office of Historic Preservation date May 2011; revised December 2011

street & number 1725 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 100 telephone (916) 445-7000

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

<b>Name of Property:</b>	<b>Trestles Historic District</b>
<b>City or Vicinity:</b>	<b>San Onofre State Beach</b>
<b>County:</b>	<b>San Diego</b>
<b>State:</b>	<b>California</b>
<b>Photographer:</b>	<b>Milford Wayne Donaldson</b>
<b>Date Photographed:</b>	<b>3 March 2011</b>
<b>Location of Original Digital Files:</b>	<b>Sacramento, California</b>
<b>Description of Photograph(s) and number:</b>	<b>See <i>Photographs Continuation Sheets</i></b>

**Property Owner:**

(complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

LAND: Brigadier General Vincent A. Coglianesse, Commanding General  
name Marine Corps Installations West

---

street & number Camp Pendleton, Building 1160, Box 555200 telephone (760) 725-1777  
city or town Camp Pendleton state CA zip code 92055-5200

SEA: State of California, Managed by the California State Lands Commission\*  
name Curtis Fossum, Executive Officer [Curtis.Fossum@slc.ca.gov](mailto:Curtis.Fossum@slc.ca.gov)

---

street & number 100 Howe Avenue, Suite 100 – South telephone (916) 574-1800  
city or town Sacramento state CA zip code 95825

\*The Commission has jurisdiction and control over State owned lands pursuant to Public Resources Code §6000 et seq. These lands include a three mile-wide section of tidal and submerged land adjacent to the coast.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).  
**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Trestles Historic District
Name of Property
San Diego, California
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Documentation Page 1

Sketch Map/Photo Key





**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Trestles Historic District

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The Beach Boys' 1963 "Surfin' U.S.A." is among the

**Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's 500 Songs that Shaped Rock and Roll.<sup>1</sup>**

If everybody had an ocean  
Across the U.S.A.  
Then everybody'd be surfin'  
Like Californ-i-a  
You'd seem 'em wearing their baggies  
Huarachi sandals too  
A bushy bushy blonde hairdo  
Surfin' U.S.A.  
You'd catch 'em surfin' at **Del Mar**  
Ventura County line  
Santa Cruz and **Trestles**  
Australia's Narrabeen  
All over Manhattan  
And down Doheny way  
Everybody's gone surfin'  
Surfin' U.S.A.  
We'll all be planning out a route  
We're gonna take real soon  
We're waxing down our surfboards  
We can't wait for June  
We'll all be gone for the summer  
We're on surfari to stay  
Tell the teacher we're surfin'  
Surfin' U.S.A.  
Haggerty's and **Swami's**  
Pacific Palisades  
**San Onofre** and Sunset  
Redondo Beach L.A.  
All over **La Jolla**  
At Waimea Bay  
Everybody's gone surfin'  
Surfin' U.S.A.  
Everybody's gone surfin'  
Surfin U.S.A  
Yeah, everybody's gone surfin'  
Surfin U.S.A.

<sup>1</sup> "Beach Boys Surfin' USA Lyrics" on San Diego Beaches and Adventures website, <http://www.san-diego-beaches-and-adventures.com/surfin-usa-lyrics.html>, accessed 23 December 2010.

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Trestles and San Onofre are among the fourteen California surf spots mentioned in "Surfin' U.S.A.":<sup>2</sup>

"Del Mar" - Del Mar, San Diego County, California

"Ventura County Line" - Ventura County, California

"Santa Cruz" - Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz County, California

**"Trestles" - San Onofre State Park, San Diego County, California**

"Australia's Narrabeen" - Narrabeen, New South Wales

"Manhattan" - Manhattan Beach, Los Angeles County, California

"Doheny" - Doheny Beach, Dana Point, Orange County, California

"Haggerty's" - Haggerty's, Torrance, Los Angeles County, California

"Swami's" - Swami's Beach, Encinitas, San Diego County, California

"Pacific Palisades" - Pacific Palisades, Los Angeles County, California

**"San Onofre" - San Onofre State Park, San Diego County, California**

"Sunset" - Sunset Beach, Oahu, Hawaii - or - Sunset Beach, Orange County, California

"Redondo Beach" - Redondo Beach, Los Angeles County, California

"LA" - Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California

"La Jolla" - La Jolla, San Diego County, California

"Waimea Bay" - Waimea Bay, Hawaii

<sup>2</sup> "Surfing [sic] USA Beaches" on San Diego Beaches and Adventures website, <http://www.san-diego-beaches-and-adventures.com/surfing-usa.html>, accessed 23 December 2010.

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Figure 1

San Onofre, 1930. [L to R] Kids' Row: Larry Green, Buddy Knutsen, Sonny Knutsen, and Russ Green, Jr. Adult Row: Babe Knutsen, Miriam Green, Russ Green, Sr., Edna Green, and friend. Five decades later, Larry became an SOSOC President. *When my grandfather first took my dad down here in 1930, there was nothing. They didn't even surf at first, they just thought it was a great place to camp.*

Rob Green

Source: *The San Onofre Surfing Club 1952 – 2002 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Album*  
 Image and caption used by permission of the San Onofre Surfing Club



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Figure 2

Fish Camp, early Thirties. *One of the great lures of 'Nofre has always been the privilege of pulling right up to the sand and parking. I was glad when they cut down the pilings at the Point. Before that, it was a heck of a walk with those old, 90-pound redwood planks.*

Leroy Grannis

Source: *The San Onofre Surfing Club 1952 – 2002 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Album*

Image and caption used by permission of the San Onofre Surfing Club



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Figure 3

James Arness and the crew, at a beach party in the early days of the 'Nofre surfing experience. [L to R] Connie (dark at far left), Gordy Freeman, Tampico, E.J. Oshier (with guitar), Jo Oshier, Jim Arness (with ukulele), John 'Huckleberry' Huckins. Front Row: Buddy Hall, Art Beard, Glen Beard, Bruce Duncan, Burrhead Drever, and John Levy. *Wasn't that the party that Cardo got so bombed he fell in the fire? No that was another one.*  
 Jo Oshier

Source: *The San Onofre Surfing Club 1952 – 2002 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Album*  
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Figure 4

Mary Ann Hawkins surfing with E.J. Oshier at San Onofre February 27, 1937.

Photograph by Doc Ball

Courtesy California Surf Museum



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Figure 5

Jackie Coogan surfing San Onofre, 1937. *Coogan used to bring his wife Betty Grable with him to San Onofre and she would complain constantly, saying things like "get me off this filthy beach." One day Coogan had sold all of Grable's furniture without her permission and then used the proceeds to purchase a new Mercury convertible. Jackie's transgression instigated a tremendous argument. He came out in the water to surf and said, "Well, boys, it looks like I'm going to have some extra time on my hands; I think I'll chrome my new motor." I never saw Betty again except as a pin-up on other sailors' footlockers.*

Don James

Source: *The San Onofre Surfing Club 1952 – 2002 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Album*

Image and caption used by permission of the San Onofre Surfing Club



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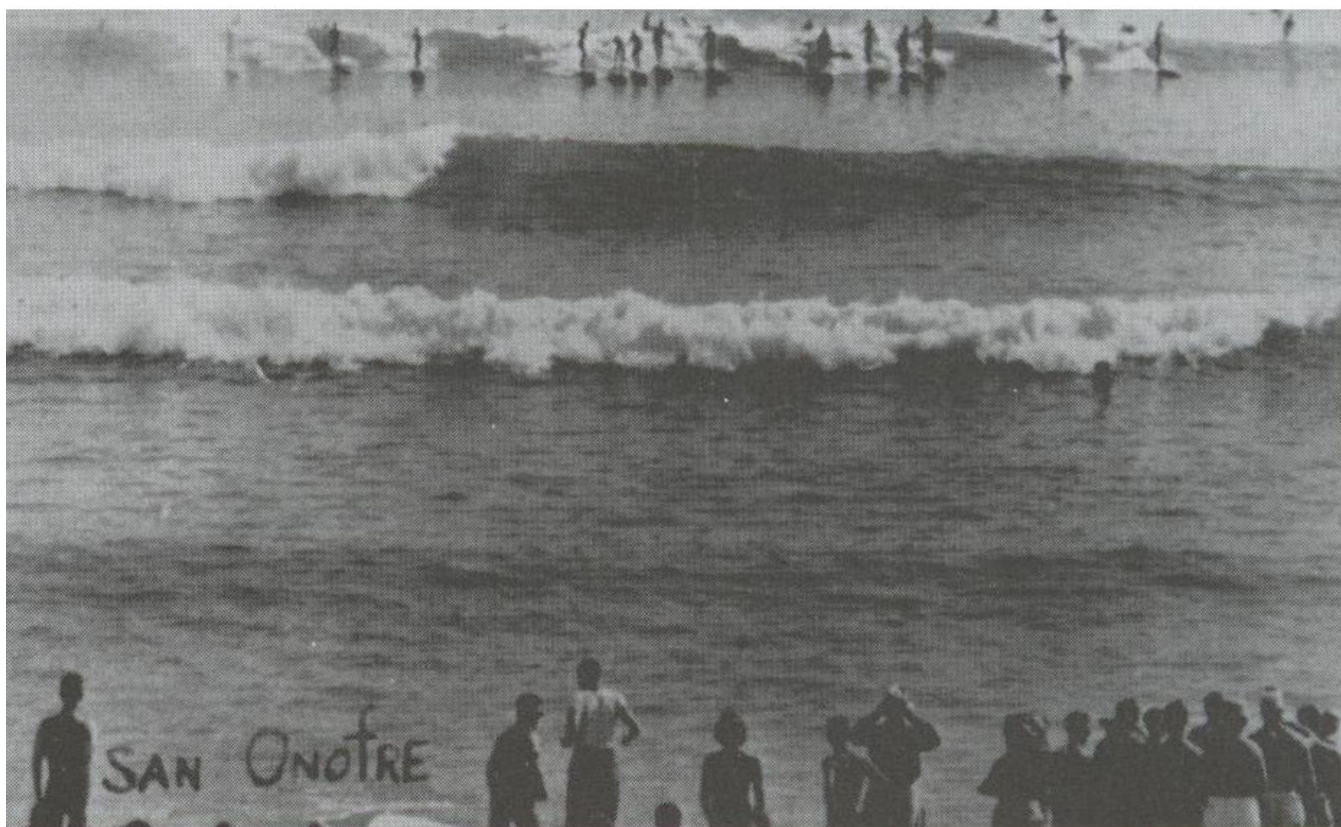
Figure 6

Despite the admitted disregard for organization, someone there in those days put together one of the only surfing contests around at the time – the San Onofre Surfing Contest. “The annual event started in the summer of '38, and the way it worked was that everyone lined the beach and ‘Bang!’ they all paddled toward a buoy sitting outside the break.”

Art Beard

Source: *The San Onofre Surfing Club 1952 – 2002 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Album*

Image and caption used by permission of the San Onofre Surfing Club





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Figure 7

A few of the boys: some of the regular crew in 1938. [L to R] Standing: Forie Neal, Dexter Woods, Ralph Dawson, Billy Brooks, Horatio, Lorrin Harrison, George Brignell, Carol 'Laho Lio' Bertolay, E.J. Oshier, Tulie Clark, and Erwin "Dutchy" Lenkeit.

Source: *The San Onofre Surfing Club 1952 – 2002 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Album*  
Image and caption used by permission of the San Onofre Surfing Club



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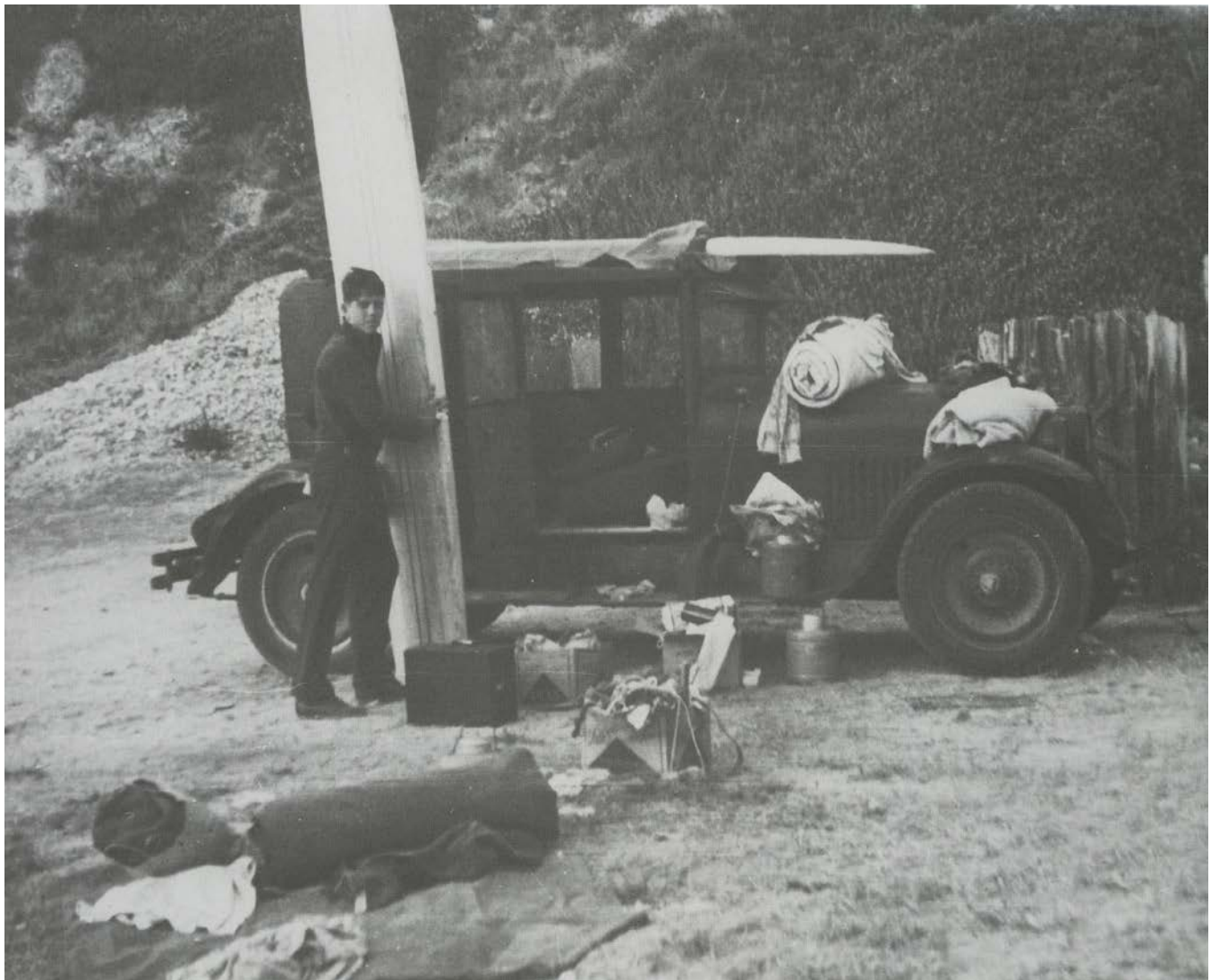
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Figure 8

Jack Quigg on a weekend camp-out in 1938.

Source: *The San Onofre Surfing Club 1952 – 2002 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Album*  
Image and caption used by permission of the San Onofre Surfing Club



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Figure 9

View from the cliff overlooking 'Nofre, 1939. *The winding road took you down to the beach. Except for the car models, things look remarkably the same 65 years later. I can date this shot because Eddie McBride's 1939 Dodge is visible. McBride was a surveyor who bought a new Dodge every year on the second of January, like clockwork. He possessed a lucrative contract from the federal government's Geo Survey to take depth soundings along the entire coast. The fact that Eddie rowed a dory eight hours a day, five days a week during the course of his work also meant that he was in phenomenal physical condition.*

Don James

Source: *The San Onofre Surfing Club 1952 – 2002 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Album*  
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Figure 10

San Onofre Texaco Service Station, 1939. [L to R] Dutch Miller, Sarah Horner, Jimmy Reynolds, Dexter Wood, Mary Carlson, Bruce Duncan, Lynn Simpson, and E.J. Oshier.

Source: *The San Onofre Surfing Club 1952 – 2002 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Album*  
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Figure 11

**1941 Contest Gets Under Way**

First heat boys, with their numbers pinned to their backs, head for "outside." The meet has begun. These annual contests are difficult to stage as the uncertain element, surf, is hard to predict. On the whole, however, they have been very successful.

Source: *Early California Surfriders: A Collector's Edition of Rare Photographs Covering Classic California Longboard Surfing in the Thirties and Forties*, Pacific Publishing, 1995 [re-issue of Doc Ball's limited-edition photo collection, originally released in 1946]

Photograph by Doc Ball

Courtesy: California Surf Museum



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Figure 12A

**'Nofre Days**

Pete Peterson wins the 1941 'Nofre sweepstakes. He is seen here as the proud possessor of the perpetual cup. Left to right: McBride, Lindberg, Okey, Pascowitz, Bailey, Harrison, Blake, Peterson, VanBlom, Williams.

Source: *Early California Surfriders: A Collector's Edition of Rare Photographs Covering Classic California Longboard Surfing in the Thirties and Forties*, Pacific Publishing, 1995 [re-issue of Doc Ball's limited-edition photo collection, originally released in 1946]; Photograph by Doc Ball; Courtesy: California Surf Museum

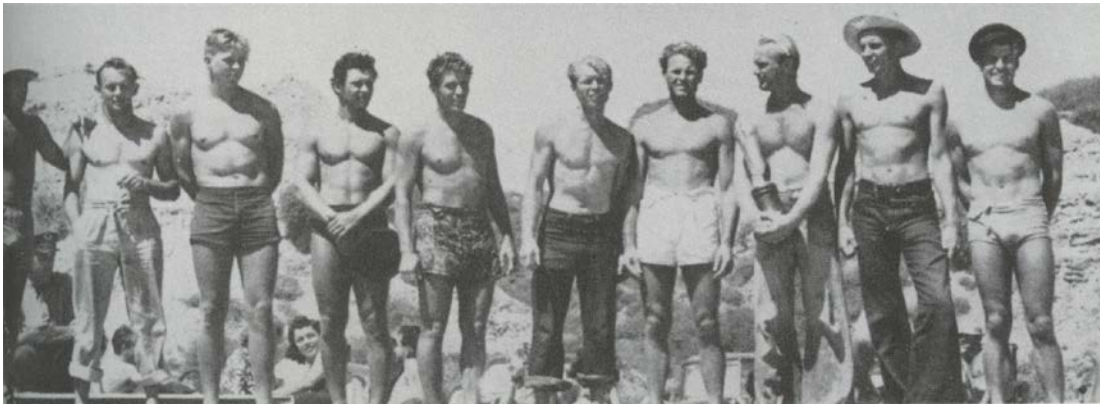


Figure 12B

Contestants Line Up for an "I Was There" Shot: A lot of familiar faces and a goodly stand of timber.

Source: *Early California Surfriders: A Collector's Edition of Rare Photographs Covering Classic California Longboard Surfing in the Thirties and Forties*, Pacific Publishing, 1995 [re-issue of Doc Ball's limited-edition photo collection, originally released in 1946]; Photograph by Doc Ball; Courtesy: California Surf Museum



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Figure 13

Marines landing on beach aboard Camp Pendleton, circa 1943.

Courtesy MCIWEST Camp Pendleton.



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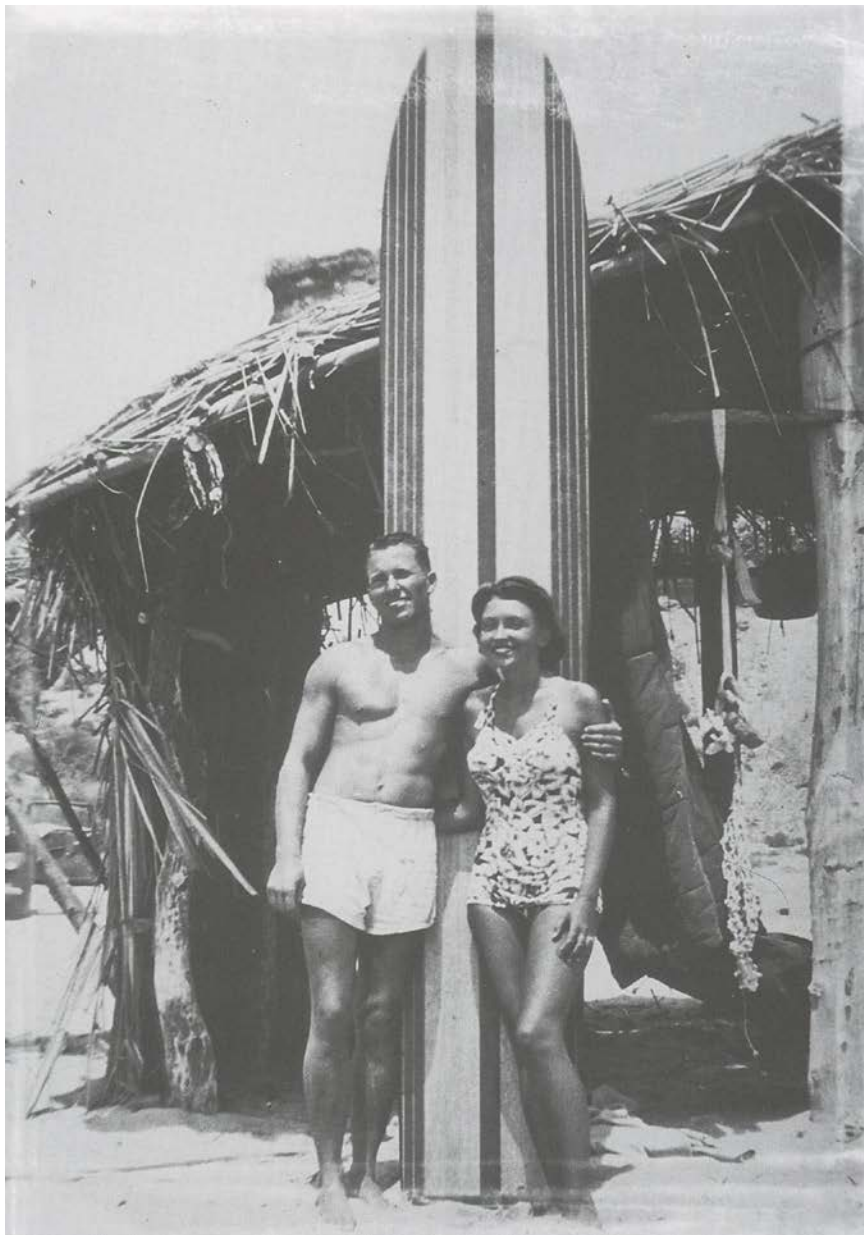
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Figure 14

Willard "Senator" and M.J. Luton, 1946. Luton spent 3 years in the Pacific Theater during the war, driving the big landing crafts into the beachheads; combat zones like Guadalcanal [sic]. It was a rough tour. He finally got back to the States in 1945, and on his first leave he literally walked onto the beach at Nofre and met his living vision: M.J. Allan Seymour

Source: *The San Onofre Surfing Club 1952 – 2002 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Album*  
 Image and caption used by permission of the San Onofre Surfing Club





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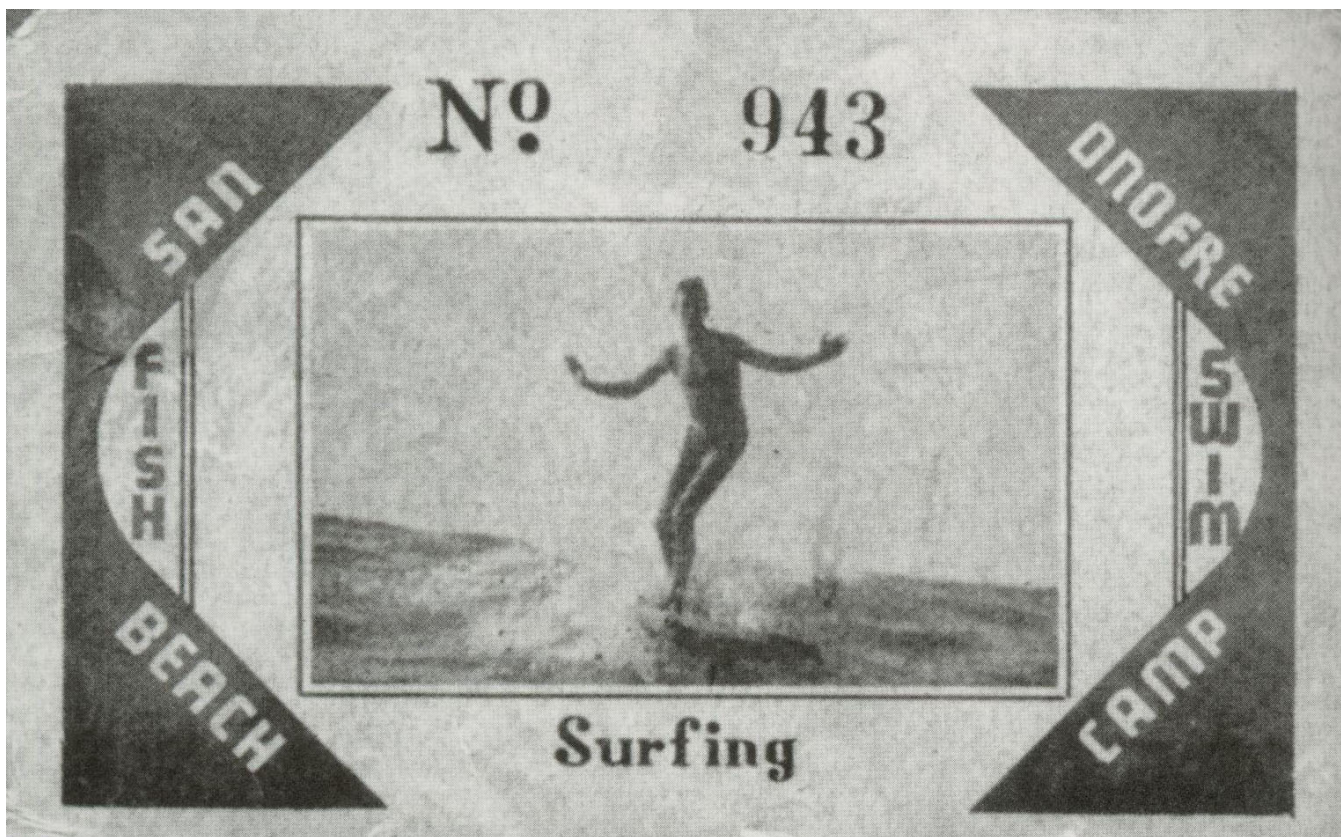
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Figure 15

The San Onofre Beach Camp parking pass was printed in a different color each year to discourage duplication, but it always featured the same photograph of George "Nellie Bly" Brignell in the center. This pass is the 1946 edition. (Courtesy of Bill Hein.)

Source: *Images of America: Surfing in San Diego*, Arcadia Publishing, 2007

Courtesy: California Surf Museum



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Figure 16

[L to R] Huckleberry (with hat), Bud Black (in glasses), Hammer Gravich (with first guitar), Dick Roach (with the second guitar), Lois Kelly (looking at the guitar), Bob Card (blond), Bob Fitzgerald (with wine), Barney Wilkes and Myrna Roach (behind), and Rosie Earle (in the white sneakers on the far right). Every Saturday night was party time in the late Forties. The deal was simple: Dig a hole, make a fire, drink, eat and play music. It was mostly Hawaiian learned on sojourns to the islands.

Bob Fitzgerald

Source: *The San Onofre Surfing Club 1952 – 2002 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Album*  
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Figure 17

The late great Duke Kahanamoku, on a visit to San Onofre in the late 1940s. Standing next to Duke (right) is Barney Wilkes. Kneeling 2<sup>nd</sup> from left is long-time friend of Duke and life-long creative Chief of Lifeguards at Long Beach, California.

NOTE: Other sources have pinpointed the year as 1948; the Duke would have been 58 years old at the time.

Source: *The San Onofre Surfing Club 1952 – 2002 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Album*

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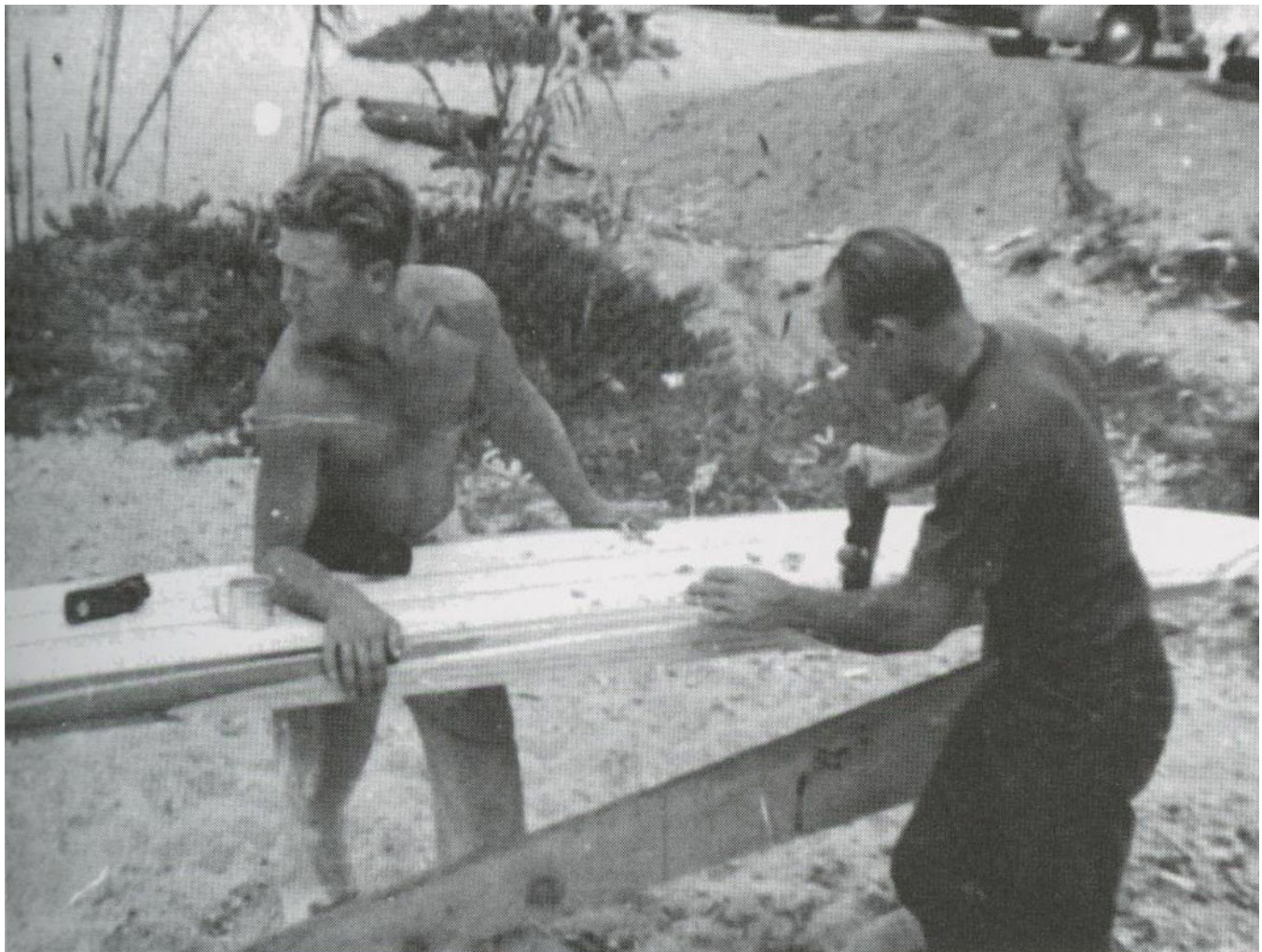
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Figure 18

Benny Merrill and Don Smith shape a redwood and balsa board, 1948.

Source: *The San Onofre Surfing Club 1952 – 2002 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Album*  
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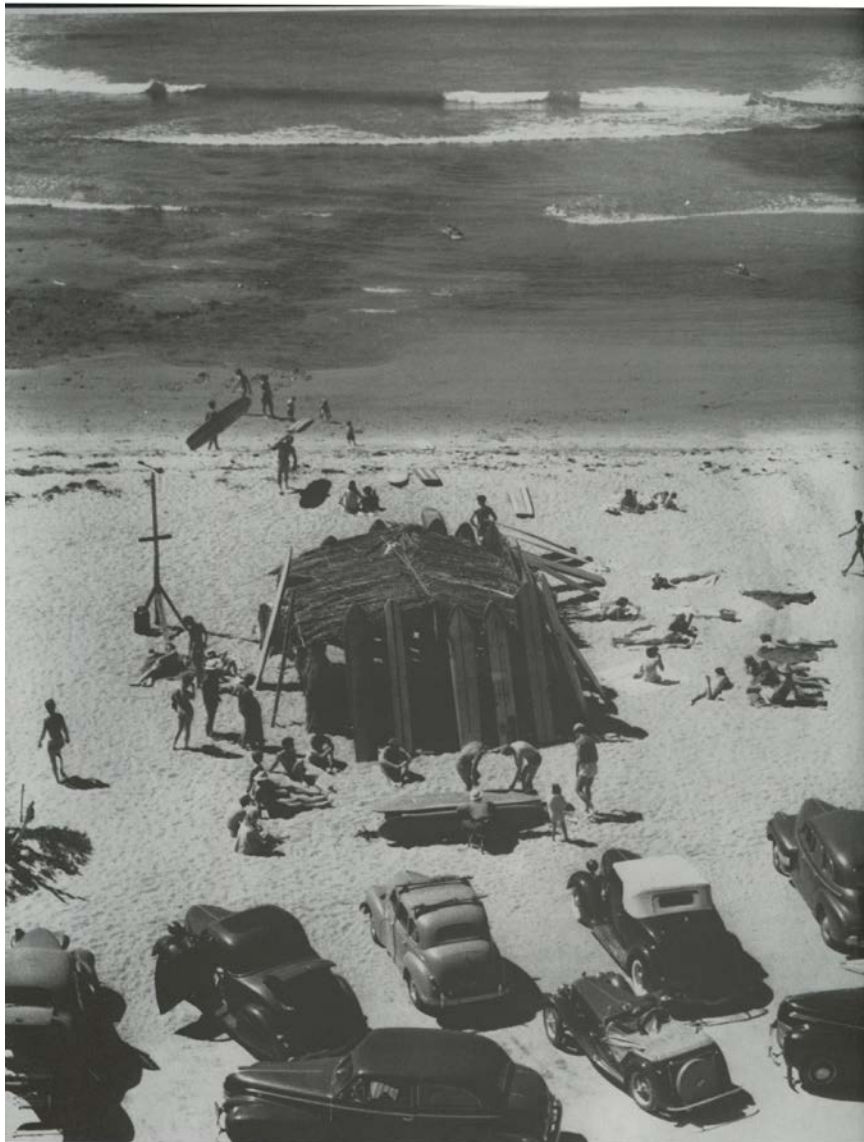
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Figure 19

The Shack, 1949. Note the surfboard being shaped in the foreground of the shack. "From June 1939 to August 1943, I never missed a weekend at San O', come rain or shine. Even when I was in the Service. In winter we kept tires burning on the beach to keep warm, cause there were no wetsuits. Those were the salad days."  
 Augie Anderson

NOTE: *Surfing in San Diego*, Arcadia Publishing, 2007 identifies the man in the hat, holding court with interested onlookers over the board being shaped, as San O' regular Bob Simmons.

Source: *The San Onofre Surfing Club 1952 – 2002 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Album*  
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Figure 20

Tampico's custom truck, 1949. The artwork on the side panel was painted by Warren Miller who later became the pre-eminent Ski filmmaker. [L to R] The Viking, Hammerhead, Pop Proctor, and Cardo.

Source: *The San Onofre Surfing Club 1952 – 2002 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Album*  
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Figure 21

Hammer Gravich, his dog Corky and Mickey Dora in 1950 looking out from the cave. Hammer was always getting into it with the girls. One week in the early '50s a whole bunch of girls we met from the winter of skiing came down to 'Nofre. They were from all over, beautiful girls. They wanted to go for a ride in the catamaran, so Hammer took them out with him to fish for sharks just outside the break. He would catch one and toss it up onto the cat. The girls would scream and run out to the outrigger and hold on for dear life. They were scared to death to jump off because there more sharks swimming underneath, even though they were just nurse sharks that ate plankton, but the girls didn't know that. They just hung out on the edges of the catamaran, jumping and shrieking. It was hilarious.

Jim "Burrhead" Drever

Source: *The San Onofre Surfing Club 1952 – 2002 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Album*  
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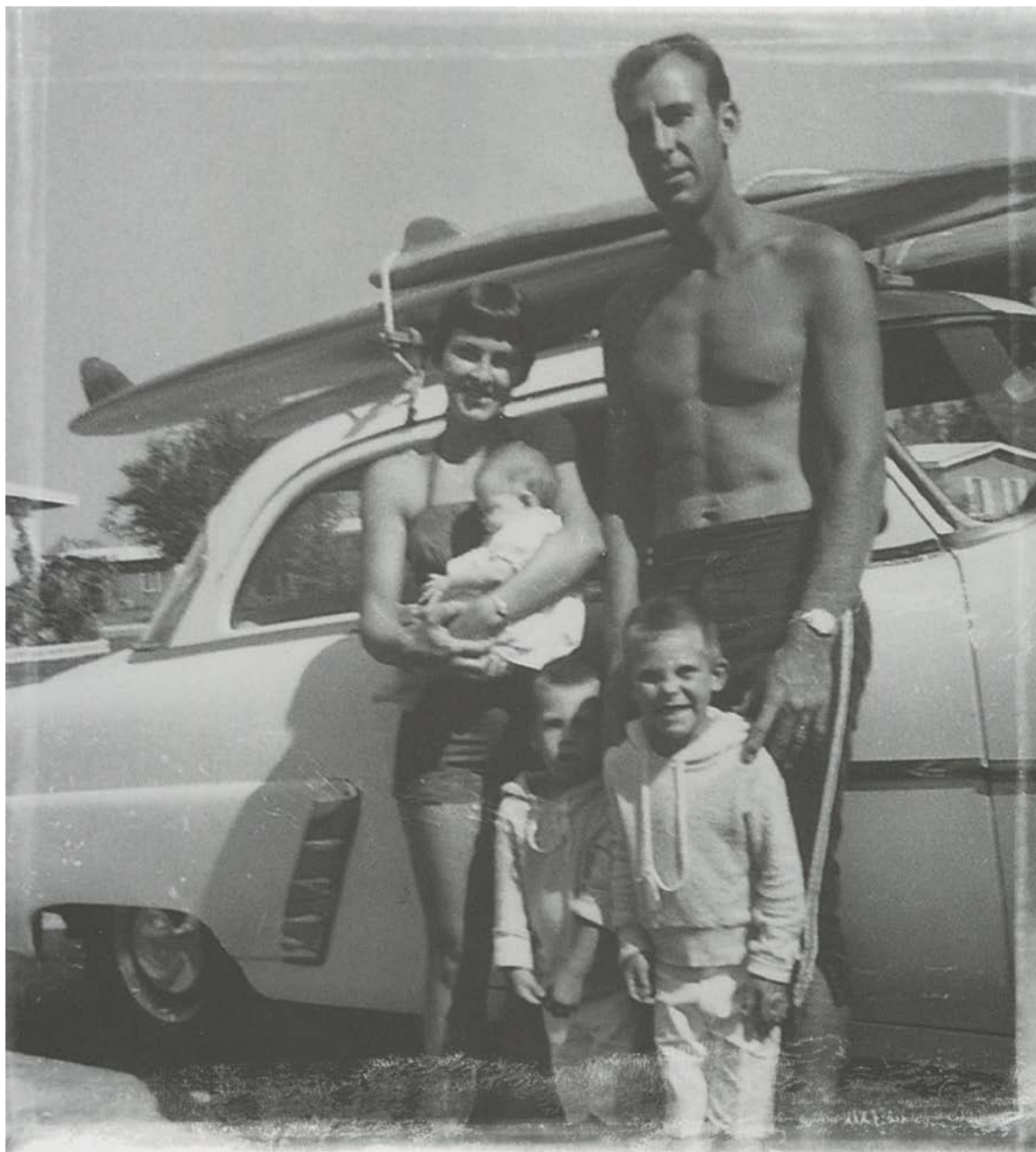
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Figure 22

The Vetter family on the way to the beach, July 1958. [L to R] Marjorie, baby Jean, John, Jim, and Bill.

NOTE: At the time of this nomination Jean Vetter is Club President.

Source: *The San Onofre Surfing Club 1952 – 2002 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Album*  
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Figure 23

Dick "Tiny Brain" Thomas, Del Cannon and Kemp Aaberg with a crew from Velzy's shop, arriving via the old "Middle Trail" for a go-out at what was then known as the "Outer" Trestle (now called Uppers). October '58.

Photograph by Perry

Courtesy Perry; Steve Pezman, author "Capers in the Key of 'T': Trestles Memories," published in *The Surfer's Journal*, Volume Seven, Number Three (Fall 1998)



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Figure 24

Larry Green, three decades into the discovery of this beach by his parents, enjoying a fine San O' backside slider, October 7, 1962.

Source: *The San Onofre Surfing Club 1952 – 2002 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Album*

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Figure 25

Doug and Bobbie Craig's van, 1965. On the left is the Tkach's wagon. On the right is the Wilkes' VW bus. The old out houses in the foreground were right where the island in the road sits today. Ever wonder why the trees and plants grow so well there? The Tikis in front of the out houses are still standing in the island today.

Source: *The San Onofre Surfing Club 1952 – 2002 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Album*  
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Figure 26

Richard Nixon becomes an honorary member of the club in 1970. [L to R] Robert Mardian, Mike Hops, Richard Nixon, Dick Hoover, Julie Brown, Tony Mardian, Denise Tkach, Tom Turner, Billy Mardian, Rolf Arness, Tom Craig, and Doug Craig.

Source: *The San Onofre Surfing Club 1952 – 2002 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Album*  
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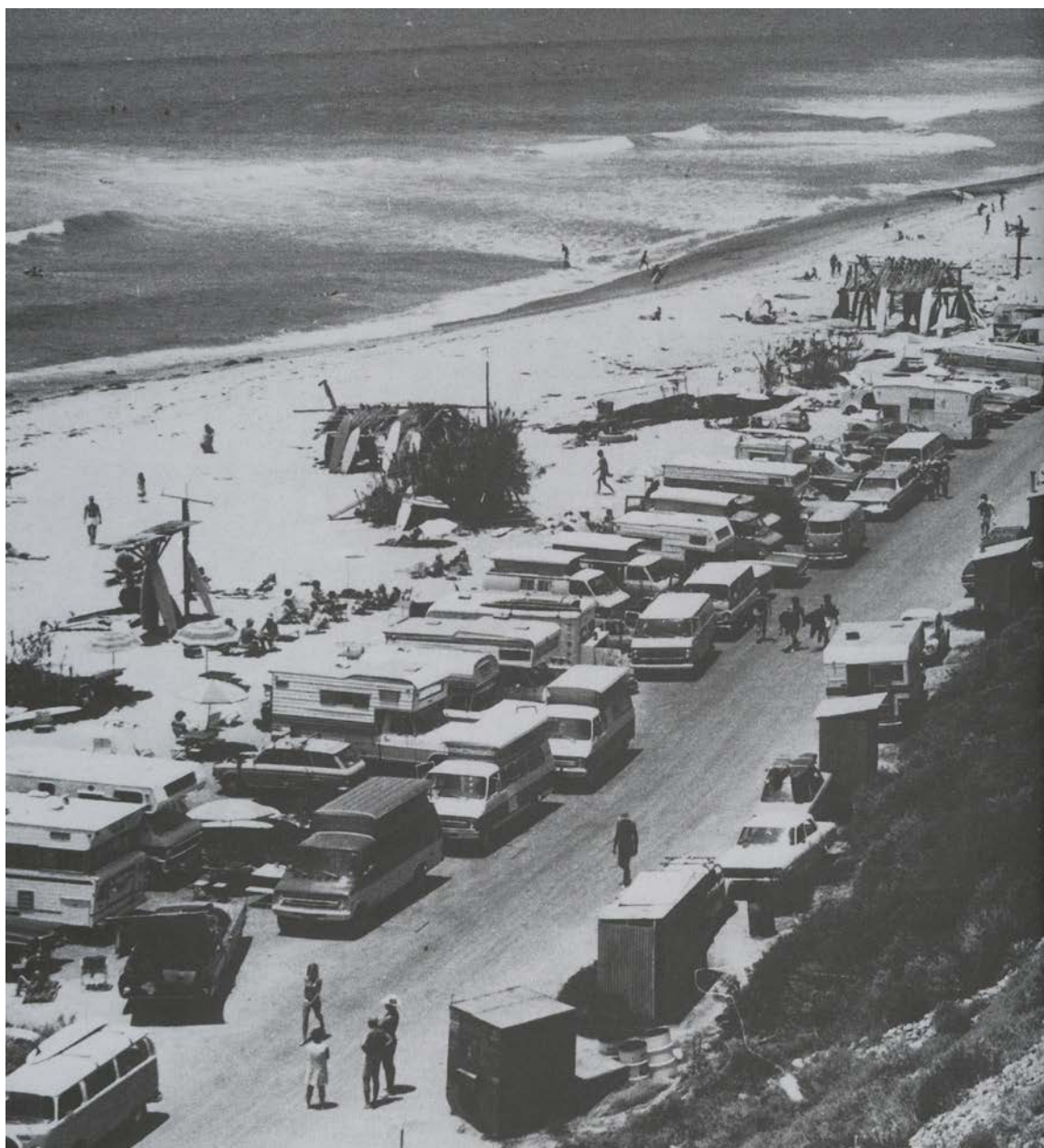
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Figure 27

High noon, summer 1971. What was at stake: a mile of the finest beachfront parking on the coast. [Just outside the frame top right is] Cotton's Point and the home of the Western White House, where Nixon was making decisions that change the world – and changed San Onofre forever.

Source: *The San Onofre Surfing Club 1952 – 2002 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Album*  
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Figure 28

Three generations of Jappe: Dick, Jeff, Shaun and Grady Lee.

Source: *The San Onofre Surfing Club 1952 – 2002 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Album*  
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Figure 29

Surfing contest at Lowers, 2006, cars parked along the old coast highway; all event structures are temporary.

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[www.californiacoastline.org](http://www.californiacoastline.org)



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Figure 30A

San Onofre State Beach Surfing Trestles Sign. Photographed by Milford Wayne Donaldson 11 July 2008.  
Sign absent on site visit 3 March 2011.



Figure 30B

San Onofre State Beach Service Road looking west; former Nixon Western Presidential White House property is outside frame to the right. Photographed by Milford Wayne Donaldson 11 July 2008.





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Figure 31

The hike into Trestles, along the creek bed and past the railroad, is part of the allure.

Photograph by Chasen Marshall, <http://www.chasenmarshall.com/?p=196>; approximately October 2008

Courtesy Chasen Marshall



**United States Department of the Interior**  
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Figure 32

Minus one or two of these more modern cars, this image of Old Man's at San Onofre could be circa-1960.

Photograph by Chasen Marshall, <http://www.chasenmarshall.com/?p=196>; approximately October 2008

Courtesy Chasen Marshall



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Figure 33

Woodies at San O, September 17, 2010.

The 13th annual Surf-Off between the North and South Woodie Clubs was held at Old Man's, San Onofre State Beach on September 17<sup>th</sup>, on the way to Wavecrest, with approximately 50 woodie tribe members attending from all parts of the country and approximately 15 woodies braving the perilous dirt trail to the surf spot. See more at <http://sites.commercecreators.com/folder1391/index.cfm?fuseaction=browse&id=277276&pageid=151>

Photograph by Dave Holmes

Courtesy Dave Holmes; SoCal Woodie Club

