

Surfing NC

**A Timeline of the History of the
Sport of Surfing in North Carolina**



John Hairr and Ben Wunderly

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By John Hairr and Ben Wunderly

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North Carolina Maritime Museum

315 Front Street

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Unidentified surfer at Kitty Hawk surfing swell from Hurricane Faith August 1966. Photo by Ron Stoner appeared in July 1967 issue of *Surfer The International Surfing Magazine*.

Cover photo shows surfing contest at Kitty Hawk circa 1966. Image from the Aycock Brown Collection, Outer Banks History Center, NC Archives and History.

Acknowledgements

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who took the time to help us in our efforts to preserve the history of the sport of surfing in North Carolina. The *Surfing NC* project involved collaborating with fellow surf historians, as well as researching numerous documents and publications housed in archives across the state and country. The project also involved interviewing many people associated with the sport of surfing in North Carolina, including surfers, surfboard makers and surf shop owners.

We especially appreciate the generous support of the Buddy Pelletier Surfing Foundation and the Eastern Offset Printing Company of Atlantic Beach, North Carolina, without whose help the printed version of this book would not have been possible.



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The waves along the Outer Banks of North Carolina can provide optimum conditions for surfing. This unidentified surfer at Rodanthe was competing in the Battle of the Banks contest where top surfers from the Outer Banks compete with those from Virginia Beach, Virginia. Photo by Dick Meseroll, *Eastern Surf Magazine*.

Project Overview

When one thinks about the words history and surfing together, the mind may conjure up images of surfers challenging the big waves off Hawaii, or perhaps even of Samoans or Australians riding a lonely beach in the remote Pacific. Then, when one considers the famous surfing locations along the East Coast of the United States, one might dream up images of Cocoa Beach, Florida or Atlantic City, New Jersey. One might not be inclined to include North Carolina among such hallowed surfing locales, but that would be a mistake. Although it is impossible to determine who rode the first wave or made the first surfboard at any of these places, we do know that surfing has been taking place in the Old North State for more than a century.

As coastal economies shifted to more tourism and recreation based businesses and people began to afford more free time for travel and leisure, sports like surfing gained popularity along the Carolina shore. Who would have guessed that people would be trying such an odd activity as riding a wave toward the sand on a wooden plank at places like Wrightsville Beach or Kitty Hawk? As a matter of fact, people eventually discovered that the beaches of the outer barrier islands produced some of the best waves on the eastern seaboard, spawning a sizeable industry of surfboard shapers and surf shops in North Carolina, not to mention producing some very talented competitive surfers as well.

In the summer of 2013, we began making plans for a special program and exhibit detailing the history of surfing along the coast of North Carolina. There have been some really good localized efforts to chronicle the history of the sport, such as Peter Fritzler's work with the Cape Fear Surfing Archive at the University of North Carolina in Wilmington, but there was as yet no effort to investigate the story of surfing as it re-



The *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* of Honolulu, Hawaii, ran a letter penned by Burke Bridgers of Wrightsville Beach in the April 7, 1910 issue. Bridgers was inquiring for further information relating to Alexander Hume Ford's writings about surfing and the types of boards used at Waikiki.

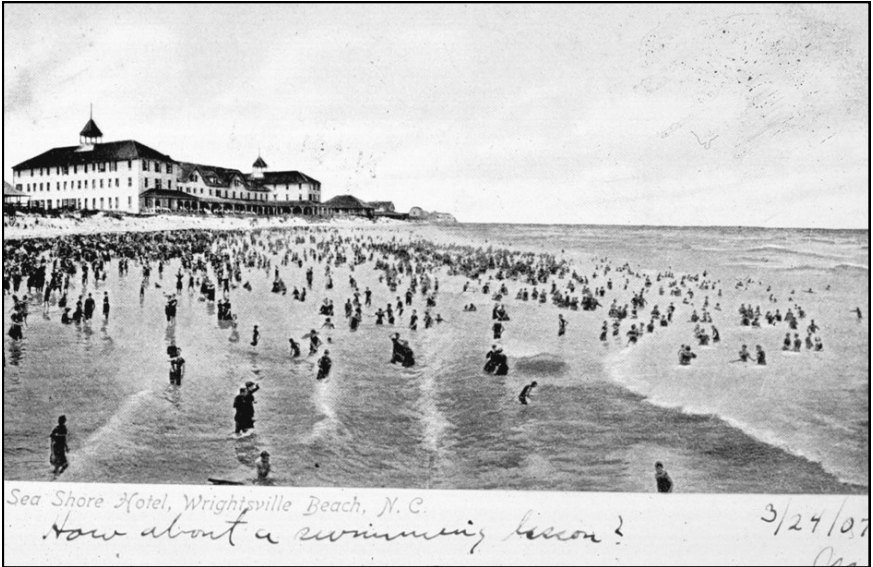
lates to the state as a whole. None can argue that surfing is a quintessential maritime activity. We therefore set out to see what we could find that was pertinent to our project.

To accomplish this, it was necessary that we begin assembling documentation from a variety of sources to learn as much as we can about the history of surfing here in North Carolina. In addition to the traditional primary sources such as photographs, magazines and newspapers, it became evident that there are still many people alive today who were instrumental in the growth of the sport in the second half of the twentieth century. So part of the effort has been to contact these people to find out firsthand what they recall about certain aspects of the sport.

We also set out to try to determine as close as possible at what point in time surfing came to North Carolina. Stories abound of surfers in the 1960s travelling down from Virginia and New Jersey looking for waves to ride, and discovering that the beaches along the Outer Banks produced some of the best waves on the East Coast. Meanwhile, further down the coast in Onslow County, military personnel and their families were surfing at Onslow Beach. Most of this wave of surfers began moving down into the area in the 1950s and 1960s, when surfing began to capture the national imagination thanks to movies, music and television. Oftentimes earlier surfing activities were forgotten as a new generation of surfers arrived and discovered the thrill of the sport along the Carolina coast.

Though most historians of the sport contend that surfing arrived in the continental United States in the early twentieth century, our research uncovered several accounts demonstrating that North Carolinians were engaged in some form of “wave riding” by the last decade of the nineteenth century. There were also written accounts of surfing in Hawaii that were published in North Carolina newspapers as early as the 1860s.

What we have found is that the sport of surfing has



This postcard from 1907 depicts the surf scene at Wrightsville Beach. In the foreground bottom left is a person with a surfboard. Image from the Robert M. Fales Collection at the New Hanover County Public Library.

roots much deeper in North Carolina's past, and was practiced at an earlier date than most folks realize. As of now, we cannot say unequivocally that surfing along the East Coast of the United States started in North Carolina, any more than other locales in the region can make the same claim. We do know that surfing along the North Carolina coast was being practiced at least as far back as the first decade of the twentieth century, which makes it coeval with the point in time when surfing, which had nearly died out, was undergoing a revival in Hawaii. We also know that North Carolinians were familiar with the sport of surfing and wave riding well back into the nineteenth century. There are also some intriguing hints that surfing in North Carolina predates the famous surfing exhibitions of George Freeth in California in 1907, which many acknowledge as the birth of the sport along the West Coast of the United States.

Surfing is believed to have originated with the Polynesian inhabitants of the Pacific nearly two thousand years ago. The Polynesians carried surfing throughout the islands of that vast ocean, including Hawaii and Tahiti. Surfboards were used for utilitarian purposes, and the sport eventually evolved into the modern sport of surfing where a participant stands on the board while riding a breaking wave toward the shore. For many centuries Polynesians enjoyed surfing the waves of their tropical beaches, where the sport developed in isolation.

Members of Captain James Cook's expeditions to the Pacific introduced the sport to the outside world in the late eighteenth century. The earliest known account was written by Sir Joseph Banks, a scientist assigned to the HMS *Endeavour* during Cook's first voyage. Banks observed the Tahitians surfing on May 29th, 1769, and described their board as the "stern of an old canoe."

Cook's men also left descriptions of people surfing in Hawaii. One of the best accounts was preserved by Lieutenant James King, who compiled the official account of the expe-



The avid watermen in this photo taken in 1941 were two of the early surfing pioneers of Dare County. Tom Fearing, on the right, built a homemade surfboard that he used to paddle offshore mainly for fishing. David Stick, on the left, sold handmade juniper surfboards from his shop in Kitty Hawk. Photo from the *Greensboro Daily News*.

dition following the death of Captain Cook on Hawaii at Kealekekua Bay on February 14, 1779. King dedicated three pages of their book published in 1793, *A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean*, to describing the surfing activities of the native Hawaiians. King observed that when opportunity presented itself, the Hawaiians headed to the ocean, where, "taking each a long narrow board, rounded at the ends... their first object is to place themselves on the top of the largest surge, which drives them along with astonishing speed and rapidity toward the shore."

Our research uncovered some long forgotten surfing pioneers from North Carolina. For instance, Burke Bridgers of Wrightsville Beach and several of his friends were experimenting with surfing techniques there off Wrightsville Beach as early as 1909. We know this thanks to a letter Bridgers penned to Alexander Hume Ford, a South Carolinian who was a major contributor to the survival and spread of the sport from Hawaii. Bridger's activities along the Cape Fear Coast are being investigated today by Skipper Funderburg, a surfing pioneer in his own right who has spent much time and effort tracking down the history of the sport in the Wilmington area.

In Bridgers' letter to Ford he stated that surfboards being used at Wrightsville Beach were made of juniper. This genus of tree species includes the cypress family to which both the eastern red-cedar, *Juniperus virginianus*, and Atlantic white cedar, *Chamaecyparis thyoides*, belong. Their choice of word, juniper, was referring to Atlantic white cedar, commonly known as juniper to the inhabitants of eastern North Carolina in Bridgers' day. These trees, which are native to North Carolina, are known for being rot resistant and easily worked. Due to the curving grain and splintering characteristics of red cedar, the early surfing pioneers in North Carolina would have chosen Atlantic white cedar for their surfboards.

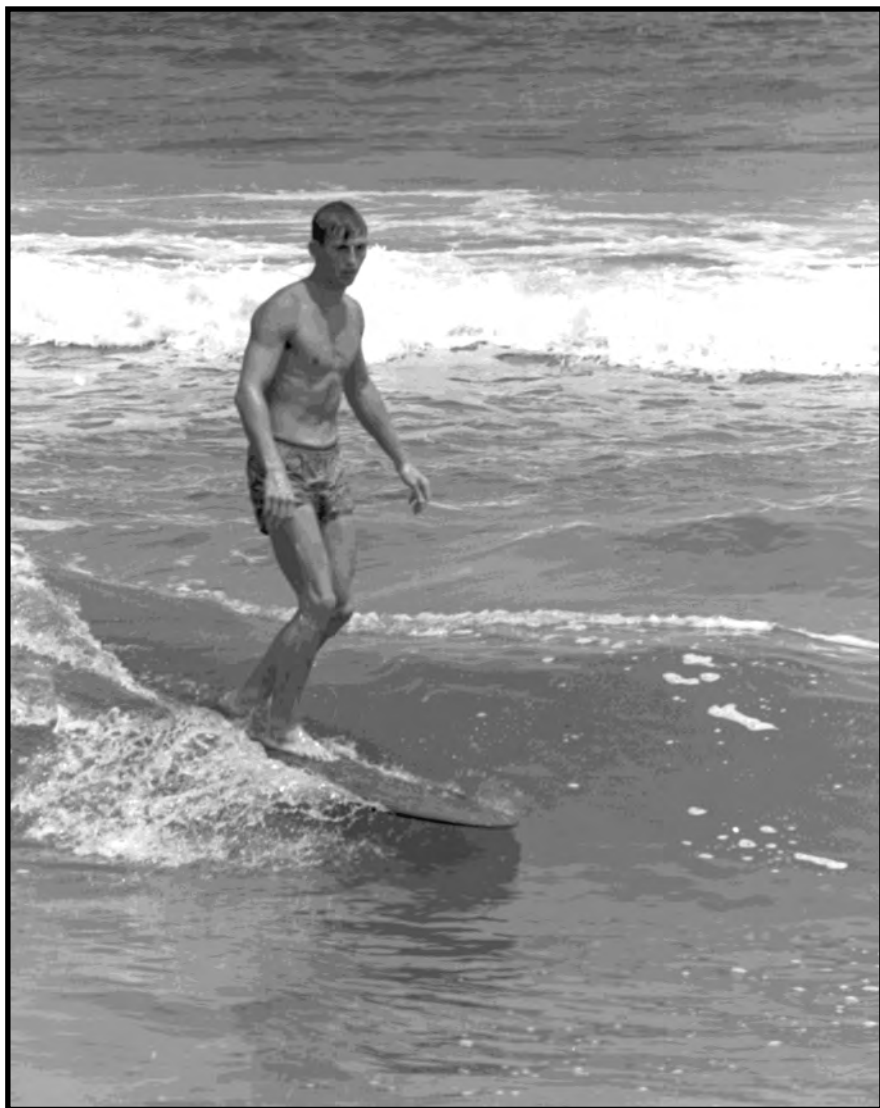
Although we have so far been unable to find any other North Carolina surfing activities predating those along the Cape Fear coast, we have been able to establish the fact that

surfing was being practiced along the Outer Banks much earlier than previously thought. For instance, we know that surfing was taking place at the resort hotels of the southern Outer Banks in the vicinity of Morehead City and Beaufort as early as the summer of 1911.

One of the most intriguing facts uncovered so far is that surfing may have been introduced to the northern Outer Banks directly from Polynesia in the 1920's. In the summer of 1928, Willie Kaiama and his team of Hawaiian entertainers were giving surfing demonstrations as part of the special events marking the celebration of Virginia Dare Day at Roanoke Island and Virginia Dare Shores in Dare County in August of 1928. A press release for the event noted, "The program there will begin at 11 o'clock in the morning, and will include a demonstration of surfboard riding by Willie Kaiama, member of a troupe of native Hawaiians now at the shores, as well as foot races, swimming contests and a bathing beauty contest, with a dance that night."

A few years after Kaiama and his troupe were putting on their surfing demonstrations, another individual was experimenting with surfing along the northern Outer Banks. Thomas Fearing of Manteo is credited by historian David Stick as being one of the earliest surfers in that area. Stick noted that Fearing built a Hawaiian-type surfboard that was capable of carrying two people. Whether Fearing, who practiced his surfing in the 1930s, was influenced by Kaiama, is unknown at the present. Unfortunately, Fearing's surfing activities were cut short by the onset of World War II and his subsequent death when his Grumman Hellcat crashed in the South Pacific in April of 1944.

The sport of surfing grew from these early efforts, and over the past hundred years there have been some notable achievements in the sport in North Carolina. Organized surfing contests began as early as 1909 in Wrightsville Beach. The First Annual North Carolina Invitational Tournament was held



Herman Pritchard test rides one of his handmade DANPRI surfboards at Kure Beach, New Hanover County in 1965. Image courtesy of *The News & Observer*.

at Atlantic Beach in June of 1967. The East Coast Surfing Association's Championship, which eventually became known as The Easterns®, was first held at Cape Hatteras in Dare County in September of 1971. A contest called the East Coast Wahine Championship of Surfing specifically designed for female surfers was first held at Wrightsville Beach in August of 1997.

Today surfing has grown into a popular pastime that generates billions of dollars annually for coastal communities. No longer do the stereotypes apply of anti-social surfers shirking family and professional responsibilities just to focus on the next big swell. Surfing has become as much a recognized sport as other independent activities such as golf or skiing.

Surfers of today include doctors, lawyers, police officers, scientists, artists and many more walks of life. A 2007 article in the *New York Times* estimated that nearly two million people in the United States consider themselves active surfers. A 2011 report by Surf-First and the Surfrider Foundation discovered that out of the top seven most surfer populated states in the country, North Carolina's surfers ranked the highest in percent employed. This translates to big dollars, especially when you include the sale of merchandise to non-surfers and lessons for first timers. Surfing apparel alone represents annual sales in the \$8 billion + range in the global economy. The 2011 report estimated the average spent on a surfing excursion in the United States, that is, a one-time trip to a somewhat local beach, was \$66 per visit. This would lend an additional \$36 million annually to the equation. That same report reveals that the average expenditure per visit in North Carolina is \$111, contributing over \$3 million to the state's economy every year. All the more reason to recognize the importance of the sport from a historical and cultural standpoint considering the role it has and continues to play in the state's economy.

The history of surfing in North Carolina runs deep into the past and is global in scope, touching such far flung places as Hawaii, Australia, French Polynesia, California, Central America,

Africa and the Caribbean. The *Surfing NC Timeline* was the first step in our efforts to bring the story of surfing in the Old North State to a wider audience.



The North Carolina Outer Banks Surf Club was located in Kitty Hawk, Dare County near Anderson's Supermarket on Virginia Dare Trail just south of the Kitty Hawk Pier. Members could park at this location and have access to the beach for surfing. This was also the location of Sherald K. Ward's surfboard rentals. Across the highway on the beach side of the road was Don Bennett's shop, Surfboards by Don, where surfboards were made and sold.



Buddy Pelletier of Carteret County competed on the professional level of surfing at various spots around the world. This photo was taken at the Seaside Pro Competition. Photo by Dick Meseroll, *Eastern Surf Magazine*.

Historical Timeline of Surfing in North Carolina

October 1855

A.D. Bache, Superintendent of the U.S. Coast Survey, reported that Lt. Archibald McRae of the USS *Ewing* had discovered “...a dangerous rock on Cortez Bank.” McRae, a native of Wilmington, North Carolina, marked the spot as a hazard to navigation in order to warn mariners to steer clear of the area. Several years earlier, McRae made the acquaintance of Abner Paki, a Hawaiian government official renowned as a big wave surfer who stood over 6 feet 6 inches tall, weighed over 300 pounds and rode a surfboard measuring over 14 feet long which weighed nearly 150 pounds. Whether McRae thought of his friend Paki as he measured the “dangerous rock” in the Cortez Bank is unknown, but surely the monstrous waves here would have tested the skills of Paki himself. The Bishop Rock, as McRae’s “dangerous rock” came to be called, gained renown in the late 20th century for producing some of the largest surfable waves on the planet. In January of 2008, Mike Parsons surfed at Bishop Rock and set a Guinness World Record by surfing a wave calculated to be 77 feet tall on its face.¹

May 1868

Newspapers in the Carolinas carried accounts of the destruction caused by the earthquake and tsunami that struck off the Big Island of Hawaii on April 2nd, 1868. One of these accounts mentioned a man named Holona, whose house was destroyed along with several others when a tsunami generated by the earthquake struck the town of Ninole. Holona had dashed down the hill to try to recover some money in his house before the wave

hit, but was too late, and was washed out to sea with his house as the wave receded. The account notes, "Being a powerful man, and one of the most expert swimmers in that region, he succeeded in wrenching off a board or a rafter, and with this as a *papu heenula* (surf board) he boldly struck out for shore, and landed safely with the return wave. When we consider the prodigious height of the breaker on which he rode to shore (fifty, perhaps sixty feet,) the feat seems almost incredible, were it not that he is now alive to attest it, as well as the people on the hill-side who saw him."²

June 1876

A correspondent for an Elizabeth City newspaper gives a detailed description of surfing at an undisclosed location in Hawaii. The writer noted, "It is very exciting, but the sea was not very rough. The surf board is a rough plank shaped like a coffin lid, about two feet broad and from six to nine feet long. The men, dressed only in malos, carrying their boards under their arms, waded out from the rocks on which the surf was breaking, and, pushing their boards before them, swam out to the first line of breakers, and then, diving down, were seen no more till they reappeared as a number of black heads bobbing about like corks in water. What they seek is a very high roller, on the top of which they leap from behind, diving face downward on their boards. As the waves speed on and the bottom strikes the ground the top breaks in a huge comber. The swimmers appear posing themselves on its highest edge by dexterous movements of their hands and feet, keeping just at the top of the curl but always apparently coming down hill with a slanting motion. So they rode in majestically, always just ahead of the breaker, carried shoreward, by its mighty impulse at the rate of forty miles an hour, yet seeming to have a volition of their own, as the more daring riders knelt and even stood on their surfboards, waving their arms and uttering exultant cries."³

March 1883 A Rowan County newspaper carries a description of “surf-riders” surfing the waves of Hawaii. ⁴

August 1885 A “surfing party” was given by a Mrs. Tucker at the Atlantic Hotel in Morehead City. ⁵

January 1888 An article in a Chowan County newspaper published in Edenton, *Fisherman & Farmer*, described surfing in Hawaii. The article noted, “It was while at Hilo we saw the natives shooting the surf; this very exciting evolution is performed by a Kanaka going out into the surf armed with a thin board about five feet long and about eighteen inches wide, and when an extra heavy swell rolls in he turns his back to the sea, lays on the board and is carried inshore with lightning-like rapidity.” ⁶

July 1890 Ten-year-old Garfield Jones was killed while wave riding along the Cape Fear River near Wilmington. Contemporary newspaper accounts noted, “Garfield Jones, a ten year old Wilmington colored boy was drowned in the Cape Fear river, near Wilmington, while riding the waves.” A form of wave riding was being practiced along the coast of Africa in the early nineteenth century, so it is possible this particular form of wave riding was brought to the Cape Fear coast via the African Diaspora. A description of this African form of wave riding was observed by James Edward Alexander off Accra, Ghana, in 1835. He noted, “From the beach, meanwhile, might be seen boys swimming into the sea, with light boards under their stomachs. They waited for a surf; and then came rolling in like a cloud on top of it. But I was told that sharks occasionally dart in behind the rocks, and ‘yam’ them.” ⁷

March 1891

An unnamed correspondent for the *New Bern Daily Journal* preserved an account of his adventures surfing in the Samoan Islands, which nearly turned fatal due to a shark attack. He noted, “The men, who had all been there before, ran down the shore, where I soon saw them hauling some planks from the bush, which I learned they had concealed on a former occasion. In short, the waves were utilized by them to enjoy one of the most exciting sports imaginable, and I was very quickly initiated into it.” ⁸

August 1891

A description of a Hawaiian “wave-sliding boards” made from breadfruit tree wood is described in a New Bern newspaper. The correspondent noted, “They are eight or nine feet long, fifteen or twenty inches wide, rather thin, rounded at each end, and carefully smoothed. They are sometimes stained black, are frequently rubbed with coconut oil, and are preserved with great care, sometimes wrapped in cloths. Children use smaller boards.” ⁹

August 1892

An article in the *Biblical Recorder*, published in Raleigh, describes the Hawaiian sport of “surf flying” and notes, “The Hawaiian lad practices this sport upon a surf board, which he calls papa he nalu—‘the wave sliding board.’ It is made of fine light wood, equal in length to the swimmer’s height, about a foot wide, and is preserved with the greatest care.” ¹⁰

August 1894

F.M. Holsclaw of Amantha, Watauga County, North Carolina, wrote an account of a trip he made from his home in the mountains near Asheville to the Cape Fear coast. He noted that on August 25th his party left Wilmington for a day at Wrightsville Beach, where he witnessed many people “riding the waves.” He noted, “On the 25th the excursionists were taken on a special car to



Willie Kaiama and his troupe of Hawaiian entertainers gave surfing demonstrations as part of the Virginia Dare Day festivities in Dare County in 1928. Pictured above are Willie Kaiama, Ernest Kamiki, Keoki Kaeliki, Princess Lei Lehua and Doreen Tryon. This promotional photo is believed to be from a similar exhibition at Virginia Beach and appeared in the *Charlotte Observer* on July 13, 1931.

Wrightsville and Ocean View, where we saw many beautiful things. I have not words sufficient to express my admiration of these places. The day was spent principally in surf bathing, fish dinners, etc.. All sorts and sizes were riding the waves during the entire day.”¹¹

March 1902

A newspaper published in Pinehurst, Moore County, North Carolina, described several Hawaiian sports, including surfing on an onini. “The onini is a board made of the famous koa wood about twelve to eighteen inches wide and from six to eight feet long, often with a flat surface, but usually with both sides slightly rounded. Pushing the boards before them, the natives swim beyond the breakers, where they wait the approach of a suitable incoming wave. When a big one comes, they lie on the board face downward, and paddle with both hands and feet shoreward, until the wave overtakes them, when by expert manipulation the onini is kept on the face of the waves and coasts toward the shore at steamboat speed. As the board rests on the face of the wave at considerable angle, some idea may be had of the skill required to keep it there during the quarter-mile rush for shore, yet some of the natives become so expert that they stand upon the board during the steadier periods of its flight.”¹²

March 1907

A postcard with the caption, “Sea Shore Hotel, Wrightsville Beach, N.C.” shows several bathers in the surf at Wrightsville Beach. Among the group is an individual sitting on a surfboard, waiting to catch an incoming wave. A handwritten note on the card states, “How about a swimming lesson? 3/24/07.” The photograph must have been taken during one of the summers prior to 1907. This particular postcard is located in the Robert M. Fales Collection at the New Hanover County Public Library.

April 1907 Article from *Travel Magazine* describing “surf riding” in Hawaii was reprinted in a Winston-Salem newspaper.¹³

September 1907 Jack London article about “Surf Riding” from *Woman’s Home Companion* magazine is reprinted in a Greensboro newspaper.¹⁴

August 1909 Inspired by Alexander Hume Ford’s article in *Collier’s Weekly* about “surfboard riding,” Burke Bridgers and several of his companions in New Hanover County attempted to replicate the process at Wrightsville Beach, but with limited success. Wishing to improve, Bridgers penned a letter to Ford in care of *Collier’s Magazine* detailing their efforts and seeking further details about the boards used at Waikiki. The letter was forwarded to Hawaii, where it was reprinted in a Honolulu newspaper. Ford is reported to have replied to Bridgers’ request for information, “...sending on for a juniper board, and is informing the Wilmington correspondent that the board is just right, although the Waikiki boys now go in for boards two inches thick and eight feet long, pointed at the bow and tapering slightly at the stern.” Whether the juniper board Ford sent to Bridgers ever made it to Wilmington is unknown.¹⁵

September 1909 Organizers of Labor Day festivities at the Lumina in Wrightsville Beach included surfing events as part of the activities. A correspondent noted, “...the third number will be the surf board sports, always interesting and entertaining for spectators.”¹⁶

September 1909 A postcard, postmarked September 1st, 1909, shows the same group of bathers in the water at Wrightsville Beach

as those appearing on the postcard hand dated in March of 1907, mentioned above. The style of the card is different, and caption reads, "BATHING SCENE AND SEA SHORE HOTEL, WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH, N.C." ¹⁷

June 1911 Surfing mentioned as one of the beach activities available to visitors of the resorts and hotels in Morehead City and Beaufort in Carteret County ¹⁸

August 1913 "Surf riding," noted as a popular activity at Virginia Beach, Virginia. Whether the sport had spread north from the Ford inspired surfers in the Carolinas is uncertain. ¹⁹

November 1916 Lyman Howe gave a lecture and film presentation at the Municipal Theater in Greensboro about Hawaii that included footage of surfing. The presentation included, "...fine stereoscopic views along the route of the Hilo Railway, the active volcano of Kilauea, cutting sugar cane and various methods of transporting same, throw net fishing, surf riding, etc., by the natives, and various other phases of daily life and scenic charms of our beautiful islands in the Pacific." ²⁰

June 1917 A postcard of the Lumina on Wrightsville Beach, postmarked June 19th, 1917, shows several people in the surf between the cameraman and the Lumina. One of these individuals is holding a surfboard. ²¹

October 1917 North Carolina newspapers carried an article about the sport of "surf coasting." The writer describes a new type of surfboard being built by American manufacturers that was an im-

provement over the plank surfboards used by Hawai'ians, as the new boards contained "an air chamber at one end." ²²

September 1921 Joseph B. Stickney, a native of Wilson, Wil-
son County, North Carolina, served on an organizational committee
that met in Honolulu on September 13th. The purpose of the gath-
ering was to organize a Pan-Pacific Olympiad, which would bring ath-
letes from across the Pacific region to Hawaii to compete in tradi-
tional athletic contests, including "ancient Hawaiian games." Duke
Kahanamoku and Alexander Hume Ford were also on the committee,
with Ford being the principal organizer of the event.

Stickney was an early member of the Outrigger Canoe Club,
which he joined shortly after moving to Hawaii as a teenager circa
1910. He and Ford frequently took youths and dignitaries visiting
Honolulu surfing at Waikiki. ²³

July 1925 "Surf board riding," mentioned as one of the
sports available to members of the Lions Clubs of North Carolina
who were planning to gather for a convention at Wrightsville Beach
in the summer of 1926. ²⁴

August 1928 Surfing demonstrations were listed as one of
several special events marking the celebration of Virginia Dare Day
at Roanoke Island and Virginia Dare Shores in Dare County. A press
release for the event noted, "The program there will begin at 11
o'clock in the morning, and will include a demonstration of surfboard
riding by Willie Kaiama, member of a troupe of native Hawaiians
now at the shores, as well as foot races, swimming contests and a
bathing beauty contest, with a dance that night." ²⁵

August 1930 Gertrude Turley of Wilmington was rushed to James Walker Memorial Hospital after "...she lost control of a surfboard at Carolina Beach." An x-ray examination revealed several fractured ribs. This incident is the earliest documented mention of a surfing related injury in North Carolina waters.²⁶

July 1931 Easley Pace, Jr. of Goldsboro admitted to Walker Memorial Hospital in Wilmington, "...having suffered a deep cut on his leg and bruises about the body Saturday when he was thrown from a surf board at Wrightsville Beach." This is the earliest documented mention of a male surfing related injury in North Carolina waters.²⁷

November 1935 Doris Duke Cromwell was injured while surfing in Hawaii. Daughter of James Buchanan Duke, Mrs. Cromwell was reputed to be the wealthiest woman in the world at the time. She was extremely fond of surfing, and won several surfing contests down through the years in Hawaii.²⁸

September 1938 The Town of Wrightsville Beach board approved the purchase of a Hawaiian made surfboard for use by the lifeguards in connection with their responsibilities of conducting rescues at Wrightsville Beach. The cost of the surfboard was ten dollars.²⁹

April 1944 Lt. Thomas Fearing of Manteo was killed when his Grumman Hellcat crashed in the South Pacific during World War II. Fearing's friend, David Stick, later wrote that Fearing was one of the pioneering surfers along the Outer Banks who built a Hawaiian-type surfboard that was large enough to carry two people.

THE KITTY HAWK CRAFT SHOP

**For Distinctive Art and Craft Items
From the Coast of Dare**

Fish-net belts, beanies and hammocks—cypress-knee
and driftwood lamps—juniper surfboards—wind sculpture
—oil and water color sketches—hand carving and ship
models.

**1 Mile North of Memorial
Phyllis and David Stick**



This advertisement for the Kitty Hawk Craft Shop ran in the June 15, 1951 edition of the *Coastland Times* of Manteo, Dare County. The business owned by Phyllis and David Stick was possibly the earliest in the area to sell surfboards.

“The riders of Fearing’s board were never able to catch a wave and stand up on it Hawaiian style, but it was used extensively for years as a paddle board on which two or even three people could go out to the wrecks a quarter of a mile or so offshore for fishing.”³⁰

November 1944 Greensboro native Lee Jackson drowned in a surfing-related accident near Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. Private Jackson was in the surf with several other servicemen when he became separated from his “homemade surfboard.”³¹

June 1951 An advertisement for the Kitty Hawk Craft Shop on the Outer Banks listed juniper surfboards as one of the items for sale. These early North Carolina surfboards were used much like the modern body boards for riding the waves. The boards were roughly 3 ft. long and 15 to 18 inches wide.³²

March 1951 Surfing at Onslow Beach listed as one of the many recreational opportunities available to Marine Corps personnel stationed at Camp Lejeune in Onslow County.³³

November 1952 A newspaperman from Sydney, Australia, who was in Morehead City for a fishing trip, was asked to comment on his impressions of the region. The Aussie, Ronald McKie, responded that the towns, homes and restaurants were much cleaner than elsewhere but that the surf is not nearly as good as the Pacific surf. “We get those long, long rollers, which start way out and provide such good surfing.” If McKie’s fishing trip was three months earlier he might have seen better surfing waves from swell generated by Hurricane Able. The storm reached Category 2 status before being downgraded to a Category 1 at landfall in South Carolina.³⁴

July 1961 Several Hatteras teens acquired surfboards and hit the waves on Hatteras Island. The high school friends included Buddy Hooper, Johnny Conner, Doug Meekins and John Ochs. John Ochs was able to talk fellow islander Wayne Fulcher into parting with his surfboard to fuel the boys' new found addiction of wave riding. Buddy Hooper got an old beat up surfboard from his uncle Bill Dillon, owner of the Outer Banks Motel. Buddy and Johnny Conner even started to make and sell surfboards in a small trailer by the Conner's family grocery store in Buxton. After a 1966 surfing contest in Virginia Beach, Buddy had the chance to welcome Florida surf legend Dick Catri to Buxton where Catri was able to give some board shaping tips to the surfboard makers of Hatteras Island. These young men were some of the early Outer Banks surfing pioneers.³⁵

April 1964 Atlantic Beach Surf Shop was started by Tommy Morrow and Ben Horton in Atlantic Beach. The two young men, along with Bobby Barts, originally started selling surfboards out of an equipment repair facility, the Idle Hour Music & Machine Co., owned by Bobby's dad. Just a year later the shop moved across the street and Tommy was the only original founder left with the business. Another re-location would see the shop move to the old Atlantic Beach Volunteer Fire Department. Today the business is just down the road from the fire station and is known as AB Surf Shop. It is the longest operating surf shop in North Carolina.³⁶

June 1964 Sherald K. Ward, known as "Governor", began renting surfboards from his small hotel in Kitty Hawk. He picked up the surfboards while on a trip to Miami Beach earlier



Long distance surfboard paddler Larry Capune receiving an honorary N.C. Outer Banks Surf Club license plate during his stop in Kitty Hawk, Dare County. Local surfing enthusiasts, in the image from left to right, Johnny Midgett, Mike Hayman and Jim Bunch welcomed Capune to the area. Sherald K. Ward, representing the surf club, is awarding the license plate. Ginger Crowe of Kinston and Linda Chappell of Buies Creek, as well as other vacationers, observe the ceremony. Image courtesy of The Outer Banks History Center, Manteo, NC, Aycok Brown Collection.

that year. Eventually Sherald worked out a deal with a neighboring business, Anderson's Supermarket, where he could place the surfboards for rent out front of the more visible grocery store. The Gov also spear headed the formation of the Outer Banks Surf Club across the street from the supermarket. He designed a license plate for members and honorary members with 'N.C. Outer Banks Surf Club Kitty Hawk' printed on the numbered plates. Members could park at the surf club and have access to the beach for surfing.

That same month, Sonny Danner and Herman Pritchard began surfing at Kure Beach in New Hanover County. A correspondent from *Surfing East* noted, "The older residents of the area would come to the beach and watch with amazement the ability of the local surfers. It became a pastime of this group. At this time the surfing area which was set aside for surfing could only be used before 9:00 a.m. and after 5:00 p.m. These rules were upheld by everyone concerned. The summer passed and interest in the new sport grew." Not everyone was pleased to see the surfers. Fishermen using the pier blamed their bad luck fishing on the arrival of the surfers and complained to town leaders, who subsequently banned surfing in Kure Beach in the summer of 1965. This was the same year that Danner and Pritchard started handcrafting their own surfboards under the brand name DANPRI, and sold them in their Atlantic Surf Shop which opened in Kure Beach. ³⁷

December 1964 East Coast Surfboards was founded in Carolina Beach, New Hanover County by Harold Petty and Lank Lancaster. This was one of the earliest shops on the Cape Fear coast of North Carolina to begin shaping and glassing their own brand of surfboards as opposed to ordering them from California. Lank's father had recently purchased several buildings in town, the old Kup-

board Grocery and the seasonal deli shop next door. Surfboards hand-made by Harold and Lank were sold in the old deli; they used the side porch and back room as their production area.³⁸

April 1965

Hunt's Surf Shop, along with the Onslow Bay Surf Club, sponsored the showing of the film *The Last Wave* by Jim Freeman at the Crest Theatre in Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County. The feature length full color film included footage of surfing from California, Mexico and Hawaii. Jack Hunt was owner of Hunt's Surf Shop, which actually operated out of his home off of Oleander Drive in Wilmington. He would even carry surfboards on the roof of his 1956 station wagon that he would sell at nearby Wrightsville Beach. He would park by the beach and display signs on the sides of the vehicle. You could also custom order a surfboard through his business as well. Jack carried Greg Noll Surfboards from California and Daytona Beach Surfboards made in Florida.³⁹

June 1965

Don Bennett moved to the Outer Banks where he started making and selling surfboards in Kitty Hawk. Originally from New Bern, Craven County, he started surfing in Atlantic Beach in 1963. He eventually moved to Raleigh in 1964 where he built his first two surfboards. Once opening business in Dare County, the "Surfboards by Don" sign above the small shop drew attention and he began taking custom orders. Due to the lack of customers on the Outer Banks during the winter Don's business was relocated to Virginia Beach for a short time, but he eventually came back to Nags Head. An accomplished surfer as well as shaper, Don placed first in the Senior Men's Division at the 1972 East Coast Surfing Championships. In 1976 Don moved to Hawaii where he shaped surfboards under the Lightning Bolt and Brewer labels.⁴⁰



An earlier location of the Atlantic Beach Surf Shop in Carteret County. Known as AB Surf Shop today, the business has been in operation since 1964. Image courtesy AB Surf Shop.

June 1965

A custom surfboard operation started in New Hanover County when surfboard shaper Mike Spencer started his own label, Spencer Surfboards, in Wrightsville Beach out of his garage. Mike would order foam blanks from Clark Foam in California and they would be shipped directly to his house. Other supplies, including the fiberglass cloth and resins, would come from local hardware stores. The ability to handcraft surfboards for the local surf conditions was a major selling point for these businesses. Mike later moved to California to shape surfboards and eventually to Hawaii where he lived with a local family and learned how to shape wooden surfboards of all kinds. Mike later returned to North Carolina and became one of the country's leading wooden surfboard builders.⁴¹

June 1965

The first recorded officially organized surfing contest in North Carolina was held at Wrightsville Beach June 12th and 13th. Sixty surfers competed in the event that was sponsored by the Wrightsville Beach Jaycees. There was a senior and junior men's division as well as a girl's division.⁴²

July 1965

Long distance surfboard paddler Larry Capune began an attempt to paddle his 18-foot surfboard from Coney Island, New York, to Cape Canaveral, Florida. His trip ended on August 24th, 1965, at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, where he was forced to quit due to injuries and a chest infection. Though he did not complete the trip, the 900 miles he covered broke his previous distance record of 507 miles. His passage along the coast nearly ended tragically in North Carolina when a fishing pier owner in Atlantic Beach threw a glass soft drink bottle at the surfer, hitting Ca-

pune in the head and knocking him off his board. Raymond Lee, 18, of Beaufort, who was fishing on the pier at the time, dove into the water, put the surfer on the board and paddled him ashore. Capune was later taken to the hospital in Morehead City, where he received four stitches over his eye.⁴³

September 1965 Bertram “Bert” Pearson of Lenoir County opened a surfboard shop in downtown Kinston. He started selling surfboards out of his family’s clothing and shoe store on Queen Street in 1964, but eventually moved out on his own. Just a few blocks from the family store Bertram opened his own business in an old paint shop. Here he could focus on selling surfboards and strictly surfing related merchandise instead of just shoes. One thing that Bert did not consider was that people were still heading to the beach since the water was plenty warm this time of year. His solution was a 1957 Ford panel truck that he loaded with surfboards and merchandise then hauled to Emerald Isle. A year later he was able to open his second shop in Atlantic Beach at the other end of Bogue Banks in an old hat shop. Bert eventually dotted the North Carolina coast with retail surf shops under the name “Bert’s Surf Shop.” At one time there were almost a dozen stores, making the business one of the largest surf shop chains in the country.⁴⁴

November 1965 Surfers Terry Edmond and Ken Dawson rescued Francis Donahoo, passenger of a small plane that crashed near the pier where they were surfing at Topsail Beach in Pender County. They were unable to rescue the pilot. Though a rare occurrence involving an aircraft, surfers rescuing people in the water is not unusual. An example of a Good Samaritan surfer was John Dailey, who was surfing off the Outer Banks in the fall of 1983 when he noticed a man



Surfer Bob Holland riding a wave in Nags Head, Dare County, in 1963. There weren't many other surfers in the area at that time which made it difficult to practice the buddy system— swimming or surfing with at least one other person in the water in case something happens and someone needs to get help. Image courtesy Matt Warshaw, *Encyclopedia of Surfing*.

and woman in distress beyond the breakers. Daily used his surfboard as a flotation device to swim both people back to shore.⁴⁵

April 1966 Wrightsville Surf Contest held April 8th and 9th. Paul Shirkey won the Senior Men's Division, Tom Davidge the Junior Men's Division, and Kinnon Binford the Boy's Division. International surfing standout Greg "Da Bull" Noll made a surprise appearance at the contest when he dropped by unexpectedly Friday, April 8th.⁴⁶

May 1966 A promotional article on Cape Lookout National Seashore touts surfing as one of the activities to experience on the "relatively untouched 20-mile stretch of Core Banks." The article lists several ferry outfitters that can take you to the island which is only accessible by boat.⁴⁷

June 1966 Nags Head Surfing Association was formed. The group engages in community service projects to help improve the reputation of surfers.⁴⁸

July 1966 The *Sports Illustrated* July 18, 1966 issue contained an article titled "Riding the Wave of the East Coast's Surfing Boom." The article covered an East Coast trip that was made by world renowned surfer Phil Edwards of California, a big charger in heavy surf and a celebrity in respect to surfing magazines and films. Even though few details were given in this article, Bob Holland of Virginia Beach took Phil and his crew on a trip to the Outer Banks of North Carolina in search of good waves. The group headed south and checked every pier, jetty and sandbar all the way to Hatteras Village.

⁴⁹

September 1966

Frank Sproul, owner of Ocean Surf Shop in Wrightsville Beach, appeals to that cities Board of Alderman to lift the ban on surfing along the beach strand since the summer season was coming to a close. Members from the Wrightsville Beach Surf Club had been fighting town officials and local business for two years prior regarding the restrictions on surfing in their community.

That same month, the Kahuna Surf Club of Chesapeake, Virginia, and the Outer Banks Surf Club sponsored the First Annual Nags Head Surfing Tournament. Contestants took advantage of the heavy surf generated by Hurricane Faith, a Category 3 hurricane that passed between the Carolinas and Bermuda from August 28th through September 1st generating heavy swells that impacted the eastern seaboard. The cyclone had been downgraded from a Category 3 storm after passing 25° N.

Meanwhile, down in Carteret County, several surfers from Atlantic Beach paddled out to ride the large waves generated by this hurricane, but the excitement for one eventually wore off. Surfer and lifeguard Bob Freeman was eventually rescued by the U.S. Coast Guard just east of the Beaufort Inlet channel after fighting the current for some time. Bob had drifted a distance of at least 4 miles in the deteriorating conditions before being rescued.⁵⁰

March 1967

The North Carolina General Assembly passed a bill authorizing the Carteret County Board of Commissioners, "...to prohibit and regulate surfing on the waters of the Atlantic Ocean adjoining said county." This bill was introduced in February by Representative Nelson Taylor of Carteret County, and Craven County representatives R.C. Godwin and James Sugg. The bill was ratified on March 24th, 1967. Later that same session, Onslow Coun-

ty's representatives introduced an identical bill for Topsail and Surf City. The Onslow bill regulating surfing was ratified and became law on June 21st, 1967. ⁵¹

May 1967 The Brevard College newspaper, *The Clarion*, printed an article for young women on how to meet surfers or on how to borrow a surfboard while at the beach. The article is somewhat vague as to what the intended advice was. ⁵²

June 1967 A correspondent for *Atlantic Surfing* described several surfing spots along Onslow Bay, including Topsail Beach. "At Topsail, which is located about forty miles north of the mouth of the Cape Fear River, there is a bar and a beach break; this is generally considered the northern-most surfing area in the lower portion of the Bay. The break in this area is found at 'Barnacle Bill's'—a very fast bar break, either left or right, that comes into a closeout shorebreak."⁵³

June 1967 The First Annual North Carolina Invitational Tournament sponsored by Atlantic Beach Surfing Association was held at Atlantic Beach. This same year the Town of Atlantic Beach agreed to officially allow surfing within the town limits, excluding areas roped off for swimming.

That same month, Frank Barbee opens the first surf shop in Brunswick County. The Yaupon Beach operation was just to the west of the Yaupon Beach Pier on Oak Island. It was located in the same building as an ice cream shop and bingo parlor owned by Gibson V. Barbee Jr. They carried Hansen surfboards from California and also rented inflatable rafts. ⁵⁴

July 1967 An article was printed in the July issue of *Surf-*

er Magazine that covered the 1966 East Coast Championships at Virginia Beach, along with the story of a surfing adventure to the Outer Banks. Californian Don Carter who was along for the ride stated that Nags Head had some of the best waves on the East Coast. The group of travelling surfers eventually ended up at Cape Hatteras as the swells from distant Hurricane Faith were growing. The author of the article wrote that this was the biggest surf he had ever seen except for Hawaii.⁵⁵

August 1967 *The Coastland Times* of Manteo reported that 21 people had been cited for “illegal surfing” and fined fifteen dollars. The majority of the violators were from southeast Virginia with a few from Florida and one from New Jersey. By 1977 the fine for “surfing in a restricted area” within Dare County increased to twenty seven dollars.⁵⁶

August 1968 An article in *The State* magazine informed readers about the popularity of surfing in North Carolina and how it was “Catching On.” It mentions the formation of the Atlantic Beach Surfing Club in 1965 and the Atlantic Beach Surfing Association in 1966 which started with twelve members and by spring of 1968 had tripled in size. The article also refers to “58 miles of undeveloped ocean front” on Shackleford and Core Banks that “should afford ample opportunity for surfers.”⁵⁷

September 1968 Will Allison competed in a surfing contest held at Carolina Beach and placed first in the Novice division. He would go on to be one of the top competitive surfers from North Carolina throughout the 1970’s and 80’s, placing first in one of the divisions at the 1979 U.S. Surfing Championships held on South Pa-



Bert's Surf Shops operated up and down the coast of North Carolina. There were locations in Dare, Carteret, Pender and New Hanover counties as well as across the border in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. The original shop was located in Kinston, Lenoir County, well inland from the coast.

dre Island, Texas. In 1980, Will was the first North Carolinian to be selected as a member of Team USA for the World Surfing Championships held in Biarritz, France. The team won a gold medal. Many other first place trophies would be earned by Will at various competitions including the East Coast Surfing Championships of 1980, '81, '82, '83, '84, '88 and 1997. Will also became a very accomplished surfboard shaper over the years since his first handmade board in 1976. In 1982 he was recruited as a judge for the Association of Surfing Professionals which allowed him to travel the world while scoring maneuvers of the top surfers on the planet. In 2006 Will Allison was inducted into the East Coast Surfing Hall of Fame.⁵⁸

March 1969 The Chowan College newspaper, *Smoke Signals*, mentioned the formation of a new organization for students, the Surfing Club. Luis Revelle, a native of Newport Beach, California, is listed as the founder and President of the new club. Chowan College is located in Murfreesboro, North Carolina.⁵⁹

June 1969 A promotional article on Onslow County printed in *The State* magazine refers that Topsail Island has "25 miles of beautiful white sand for swimming, surfing and fishing."⁶⁰

August 1969 Holland Surf Shop, Ltd. of Kill Devil Hills between milepost 5 and 6 was listed in the advertisement section of the August 1st copy of *The Coastland Times*. Bob Holland and Pete Smith, both of Virginia Beach, opened the predecessor to this business circa 1963 under the name Smith and Holland Surf Shop, which was the same as their business in Virginia Beach. By 1969 Bob had traded ownership of his half of the shop in Virginia Beach for full ownership of the Kill Devil Hills location and renamed it Holland Surf

Shop, Ltd. Robert Lee “Bob” Holland began riding waves at an early age in the 1930’s. His first surfboard was a 12 ft. handmade board constructed of mahogany, a hollow board with cork drain plugs. As Bob got older he quickly realized that the Outer Banks of North Carolina produced very good surfing waves. In the 1950’s he began making forays into North Carolina to surf at Nags Head and surrounding communities. Larry Gray, a resident of Dare County, would watch Bob surf in Nags Head so he could learn the basics of the sport. Bob was a very skilled surfer and won many competitions throughout the country over the years. He took first in the Senior Men’s division at the East Coast Surfing Championships in 1966, ’68 and ’71 and at the United States Surfing Championships in California in 1967 as well as the Senior Grand Masters in 1993. Bob Holland was inducted in the East Coast Surfing Hall of Fame in 1996.⁶¹

February 1970 Bill Frierson, originally of Coronado, California, opened a surfboard shaping business in a small trailer in Kitty Hawk. Though not much of a storefront, these boards were for sale under the name Bill Frierson. Bill was a well skilled surfer and took his knowledge of wave riding to the shaping room to make the best possible boards. When things got cold in Dare County Bill would head south for the winter to shape boards for Sunshine Surfboards in Indialantic, Florida. In 1974 Bill and friend Les Shaw bought Wave Riding Vehicles surfboards based out of Virginia Beach. After twenty three years with WRV, Bill went back out on his own to make boards under the label Frierson Designs. Bill was inducted into the East Coast Surfing Hall of Fame in 2002.⁶²

May 1971 Barton Decker opens Hatteras Island Surf Shop in the old general store and post office building in Waves just



The East Coast Wahine Championships started at Wrightsville Beach in 1997. A contest strictly for women surfers, the competition takes its name from the Polynesian word for woman surfer. The annual contest ran until 2011 and was one of the largest of its kind in the country. Photo by Ed Potter, courtesy Anne Weber.

south of Rodanthe. At first the shop was just a seasonal operation during the summer, then May through October and eventually open year round. They were the first dealer for Wave Riding Vehicle surfboards made in Virginia Beach.

July 1971 The *Coastland Times* of Manteo runs an ad for Harris Surf and Ski Ltd. in Kill Devil Hills. Harris Pulley of Virginia opened the business after already establishing several locations in the tidewater area of Virginia. Pulley sold surfboards that were made in California, Hawaii and Australia.⁶³

September 1971 The annual Eastern Surfing Association's Championship, later to be known as The Easterns®, was held at Cape Hatteras, Dare County. The United States National Park Service's Cape Hatteras National Seashore did not allow the event to happen on their property the year before, but just three weeks prior to the 1971 contest decided to allow it at the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse beach. The competition originally started in 1968 as a circuit series with one of the contests held at Wrightsville Beach. After 1971 the contest would be held in Dare County every year.⁶⁴

June 1972 Paul and Brooks Pearce open a shop called A Part of the Universe which sells surfboards in Carolina Beach. They would later start making America Surfboards to sell in their shop.⁶⁵

August 1973 Mickey Marsh of Atlantic Beach is the first North Carolinian to win any event at the East Coast Surfing Championships in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Mickey won the paddle race at the annual competition that originated in 1963. Mickey was one of three boys raised by Bette Marsh, who served as the Eastern Surfing

Association's District Director for North Carolina from 1968 to 1979. Bette also started Marsh's Surf Shop in Atlantic Beach in 1972. In 1981 the Eastern Surfing Association established the Marsh Scholarship Fund in honor of her family's hard work with the organization and for the example set by her son, Mike, who showed that earning an education is important no matter what hurdles you may encounter. In 1998 Bette Marsh was inducted into the East Coast Surfing Hall of Fame.⁶⁶

September 1973 Toni Bryant, from Carolina Beach was the first North Carolinian to win the women's division at the Eastern Surfing Association Championships held at Cape Hatteras in Dare County. Her winnings also consisted of a check that would help defray costs for traveling to compete at the national surfing tournament in Malibu, California. Toni declined the offer and refused the check because she was a full time student at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and did not want to miss any classes or assignments at school.⁶⁷

May 1974 Ted James started a seasonal surfboard manufacturing operation in Buxton, Dare County. Originally from south Florida, Ted was interested in the fishing on the Outer Banks and after investigating the area a few times he moved his family to North Carolina. The second location of his Fox Surfboards became a year round business in 1976. John Parton assisted in the move and set up of the operation but eventually returned to Florida. A team rider and distributor for Hansen Surfboards of California, Ted began shaping his own surfboards in 1968. He eventually came up with the name from a family pet, an abandoned fox kit that he acquired while on a trip to Mexico. One of Ted's top team riders for Fox was Jorge

Machuca, a champion surfer from Puerto Rico. Ted was also a very skilled surfer and even represented the East Coast in the 1970 World Surfing Championships in Victoria Australia. He was inducted into the East Coast Surfing Hall of Fame in 2008.⁶⁸

September 1974 The United States Surfing Championship was held for the first time since starting in 1959 at an East Coast location, this time in Buxton. It would be held at this location in 1978 and 1982 as well. The event originally began as the West Coast Surfing Championship, but in 1964 became the United States Surfing Championship and later the United States Open of Surfing.⁶⁹

May 1975 Jim Vaughn of Florida opens Resin Craft in Nags Head, Dare County. Owned by his friend Skip Ledingham, Jim managed the store which carried beach wear and also sold skateboards and even furniture. A year later the shop was renamed Whalebone Junction after the location where it stood, the intersection of US 64 and NC 12. A service station at the same intersection had displayed the skeleton of a whale out front of the garage since sometime in the 1930's giving rise to the name. Jim took full ownership of the business and eventually changed the name again to Whalebone Surf Shop, the store expanded its stock to include surfboards and surfing gear and even added multiple locations at the Outer Banks Mall, Kitty Hawk, Rodanthe Pier and later Virginia Beach.⁷⁰

July 1975 The early beginnings of Sweetwater Surf Shop were started at Wrightsville Beach by Jim Skiba and Dave Endress. The shop had a very small start above a local bar known as Red Dogs. Mostly surfboard making materials were sold, like fiberglass cloth, resin and foam blanks for the core of the board. In the early years the shop car-

ried surfboards made by Dave under the label Sweetwater, eventually they would offer surfboards made by other local North Carolina shapers, Odyssey surfboards by Chris Adams and Eavey Rider boards by Greg Eavey. After several re-locations on the island and expanding to other surfing accessories and merchandise the shop was sold in 1995 to the parents of an up-and-coming surfer from Wrightsville Beach, Ben Bourgeois. The same year Ben's parents purchased the shop he won the Quiksilver World Grommet Contest in Bali Indonesia.⁷¹

September 1975 Ben Lane and David Bear became co-directors of the Virginia - Outer Banks district of the Eastern Surfing Association (ESA). In 1977 Ben was the sole director of the group, and was not only a district director of a competitive surfing association, but also a competitive surfer himself, taking home seven first place wins from the East Coast Surfing Championships between 1973 and 2001. The district he oversaw formed in 1970 and previously encompassed Virginia and both Carolinas. In 1978 Harry Purkey was the district's director but two years later Ben, now Competition Director for the entire Association, submitted a petition to the ESA board of directors from the Virginia - Outer Banks district members to divide the group into two separate districts. In 1980 the Virginia / Outer Banks district would split into a Virginia district and an Outer Banks district.

Also that month, Surf'n Stuff surf shop is opened in Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County by Woody Styron. Originally from New Bern, he spent time in Hawaii where he learned to surf before coming back to North Carolina. In addition to the surf shop he also ran a skateboard park, Free Wheelin' Skateboard Ranch Inc. and a hammock business, Outer Banks Hammock Company. Woody could be heard on the local radio station every morning giving the latest beach weather and wave report for Wrightsville Beach. He also served as the North Carolina District Director for the Eastern Surfing Association.

June 1976

An event known as the Atlantic Beach Hard Crab Derby held in the summer listed a surfing tournament as one of the activities. The main event was the crab races.⁷²

July 1976

A life-size papier-mâché statue of George Washington riding a surfboard took first prize in the art contest sponsored by the Guilford County Arts Council as part of the Bicentennial commemoration at the City of High Point's July 4th festivities held at City Lake Park in Jamestown. The artist, Mark Deaton, also sold tee-shirts with the image of George Washington surfing.⁷³



As the sport of surfing grew in popularity during the 1960's, less frequented beaches in the state were being promoted for the activity. This photo was taken in 2003 within the Cape Lookout National Seashore. In 1968, after the park was established, several articles were published touting opportunities for surfing. Photo by Keith Rittmaster.

August 1976

Surfer Randy Hall was bitten on the foot by a hammerhead shark while surfing near the Emerald Isle Pier in Emerald Isle in Carteret County. Hall's injuries were not fatal. This is the earliest documented encounter between a hammerhead shark and a surfer in North Carolina waters.⁷⁴

February 1977

Natural Art Surf Shop opened in Buxton, Dare County by Scott and Carol Busbey in the old That's-a-Burger building. "In The Eye" surfboards are designed and produced at the same location. Scott, originally of Cocoa Beach, Florida, had been in the trade of board making since 1968 and got his start working with Pete Dooley making surfboards labeled Contact Surfboards. The two eventually teamed up with Greg Loehr and started Natural Art Surfboards. A crew from Natural Art Surfboards actually had set up a board shaping operation on Hatteras Island two years prior to Scott's arrival but it only lasted a few years. The group consisting of Pete Dooley, Greg Loehr, Rich Price and Tom Maus worked in an old ice house in Hatteras Village. Scott later made his way up to Hatters Island but decided to make it his new home.⁷⁵

June 1977

Dave Endress, one of the originators of Sweetwater Surf Shop, opened a surfboard shaping and fiber glassing business in Leland, Brunswick County named Classical Glass. Dave, originally from Ohio, actually spent his early surfing years riding the waves of Lake Erie. He started making surfboards in 1973. After moving to North Carolina Dave eventually began shaping surfboards under the Sweetwater label. He even spent some time in Santa Monica, California shaping as an apprentice with Jay Stone of Ocean Surfboards. Dave's surfboard manufacturing operation in Leland became one of the largest of its kind, with Dave personally making over 20,000 surfboards

himself. Many aspiring shapers spent time learning from Dave and eventually went out on their own to start new surfboard labels. Greg Eavy, Shawn O'Donnell and Jimmy Keith all put in many hours at Dave's surfboard factory. Over the years Classical Glass has changed names, in 2014 it was operating under the name Glass Tech, Inc., others include Power Tools and D. E. Designs. Dave has also shaped surfboards under the Pride label as well. ⁷⁶

May 1978 Surf City Surf Shop is opened by Roy Turner and Mark Allison in Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County. In 1985 the shop sponsored the largest professional surfing competition on the East Coast, the Record Bar Pro-Am, sanctioned by the Association of Surfing Professionals and one of the stops on the World Championship Tour. Professional surfers from Florida, Hawaii and Australia surfed in the event. Several North Carolina surfers that competed and placed were Bill Curry – 1st Open Longboard and 4th Masters Division, Charlie Hunt – 3rd Open Longboard, Brian Tracey – 3rd Mens Amateur, Jo Whaley 5th Womens Division and Gina Blankenship – 3rd Womens Amateur. In addition to supporting the competitive aspect of the sport, Surf City Surf Shop also carries locally made surfboards hand crafted by Sean O'Donnell. ⁷⁷

September 1979 Bill Curry of Wrightsville Beach won two divisions at The Easterns® surfing competition, placing first in Longboard and Kneeboard. He would top this in 1982 by winning first in Longboard, Paddle Race and Kneeboard, and the following week, at the U.S. Surfing Championships in California, Bill would take first in Longboard and Individual Paddleboard. ⁷⁸

March 1980 Mickey McCarthy and Mike Hamil opened New Sun Surf Shop in Nags Head. The shop housed the shaping room for

surfboards produced under the label New Sun. Somewhat similar to the early trade of boatbuilding in eastern North Carolina, many surfboard shapers and glassers learned their skills in a teacher apprentice type atmosphere. Mickey started shaping boards in the late 1970's, spent some time working for WRV surfboards and after opening New Sun, along with other talented shapers from the area started to pass skills onto younger craftsmen like Mike Beveridge, Mike Rowe, Ted Kearns, Scott Perry, Rascoe Hunt and Steve Head. These students, now mentors themselves, have since gone on to teach young shapers in the same manner they learned.⁷⁹

August 1980 Lynn Shell of Hatteras Island, Dare County was the first North Carolinian to win the Men's Longboard competition at the annual East Coast Surfing Championships in Virginia Beach. He would win the Mixed Longboard competition in 1981, and the Men's Senior Division in 1991 and 1993. In addition to competitive surfing, Lynn also became a talented surfboard shaper getting his start at Natural Art Surf Shop in Buxton with Scott Busbey's In The Eye surfboards. Lynn created one of his earliest handmade surfboards under the label Ocean Craft, other labels that Lynn has shaped for include Wave Riding Vehicles, Seasoned surfboards, Town & Country, Bradshaw Hawaii, Hawaiian Island Creations, Outer Banks Boarding Company and SUPER-brand.⁸⁰

September 1980 Bill Curry won the Men's Division competition at The Easterns®. He is the first North Carolinian to do so. Bill would continue to place in many divisions at surfing competitions on the East Coast for years to come and eventually be inducted into the East Coast Surfing Hall of Fame in 2004. Some of the highlights over the years include first place in the longboard division at the following competi-

tions: 1979 East Coast Surfing Championships, 1985 Record Bar Professional Amateurs in Wrightsville Beach, 1987 Eastern Surfing Association Championships in Buxton, 1987 United States Amateur Surfing Championships at North Padre Island, Texas, 1992 Eastern Surfing Association Championships, 1993 U.S. Amateur Surfing Championships in Oceanside, California, 1994 U.S. Surfing Championships in Sebastian Inlet, Florida and the 1997 U.S. Amateur Surfing Championships held again in Oceanside, California.⁸¹

November 1980 Dorothy Dunn took lead of a new Eastern Surfing Association district that covered the Outer Banks of North Carolina. The new district was formed so that surfers in Currituck, Dare and Hyde Counties did not have to travel to Virginia Beach, Virginia in order to participate in ESA events. Dorothy, originally from Houston, Texas, had been a surfing enthusiast for over a decade prior to organizing this new district of the ESA. In 1982 she would win the Women's Division of the United States Surfing Championships held in Buxton.⁸²

March 1982 A surfing club for students was officially chartered at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. The group had already been meeting and even surfed in competitions several years before being chartered. The club was able to enter teams for competition in two divisions, the National Scholastic Surfing Association (NSSA) and the Eastern Surfing Association East Coast Scholastic Surfing Championships (ECSSC). Several wins during the early twenty first century by the surf club and team members include: 2008 ECSSC, UNCW – Tag Team; 2009 NSSA East Coast, UNCW – Team, Mike Powell - Mens; 2010 ECSSC, Mike Powell – Mens; 2010 NSSA National, Mike Powell – Mens; 2011 NSSA East Coast, UNCW – Team; 2012 NSSA East Coast, UNCW – Team, Tony Silvagni – Longboard, NSSA Nationals Tony Silvagni – Longboard; 2013 NSSA East Coast, UNCW – Team , Knox Harris – Open



Surfboard shaping parallels some of the early methods of boatbuilding in a way. There are a few measurements and a lot of examining by the eye. If it doesn't look right the shaper sands a little more here or a little more there. Mickey McCarthy working on one of his New Sun surfboards in Dare County, 1990. Image courtesy of The Outer Banks History Center, Manteo, NC, Drew C. Wilson Collection.

Mens, Darsha Pigford – Explorer Womens, Shane Burn - Mens; 2013 NSSA National Nick Rupp – Mens; 2014 NSSA East Coast Nick Rupp – Mens.⁸³

April 1982

Secret Spot Surf Shop was opened by Steve Hess in Nags Head, Dare County. Originally from Norfolk, Virginia, Steve spent most of his time on the Outer Banks after his parents opened Captain Frank's Hotdogs in Kitty Hawk in 1974. Steve started surfing in the mid '60s and began shaping his own surfboards in the early '70s. At the hotdog stand Steve's family also sold surfing equipment and skateboards. In 1977, along with Mike Price, Steve began shaping boards under the label Secret Spot, but didn't open Secret Spot Surf Shop for another five years. As the demand for Secret Spot surfboards grew the operation expanded to production facilities in Kitty Hawk, one behind the hot dog place and later one behind the surf shop. Other aspiring shapers would come watch the board making process, including Ted Kearns and Murray Ross who went on to create their own custom surfboard labels. Mike Price eventually opened his own surf shop nearby where he could sell his custom made surfboards under the label Michael Price Designs. He called the shop Fat Boys and covered the shop floor in sand to create a beach type atmosphere. Michael later added a new label of his custom boards to the shop known as Hot and Nasty Surfstyx. Meanwhile Steve starting promoting the sport of surfing in the community by organizing surf movies to be shown at the Dome and several movie theatres in the area. He also put together one of the largest surfing competitions in North Carolina, the Outer Banks Surf Classic, in 1985 at the Nags Head Pier and Atlantis Lodge. Steve would later take his passion for the sport and his desire to help others and communities to the other side of the world, helping at risk and underprivileged youth of the Philippines.⁸⁴

August 1982 Wade “Buddy” Pelletier of Atlantic Beach was the first North Carolinian to win the Men’s Pro Division of the East Coast Surfing Championships. Buddy was a well-liked competitor throughout the country and often pulled off maneuvers that other riders did not know were even possible. Often thought of as the “Southern Gentleman” for his kindness and hospitality, his surfing style was described as strong and radical. Crowds would get so excited at competitions they would cheer any moment he began to paddle for a wave.⁸⁵

September 1982 A young Kelly Slater of Florida took first place in the Menhune Division at the Eastern Surfing Association Championships under the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse. The now multiple world surfing champion relied on the heavy waves that break along the Outer Banks as a training ground in the early years of his surfing. Slater referred to the waves at Hatteras Island as his Pipeline, comparing the surf to that of the famous break on Oahu’s north shore in Hawaii. Hatteras was an East Coast location where he could surf waves comparable to those ridden in the Pacific.⁸⁶

August 1984 Jo Roycroft Whaley of Wilmington was the first from North Carolina to win the Women’s Division of the East Coast Surfing Championships held in Virginia Beach, Virginia. She would win again in 1986.⁸⁷

August 1986 Michael Paul opens Hot Wax Surf Shop in Wilmington, New Hanover County. Michael’s brother Greg had opened the original Hot Wax Surf Shop in Atlantic Beach, Carteret County two years earlier. The brothers grew up in New Bern, Craven County where they would hitch hike with their surfboards in order to get to the

beach and surf. They both learned to shape surfboards as well, Greg made boards under the Hot Wax label and Michael under the label Proline. Michael started shaping in 1981 and learned the trade while he was living in Hawaii.⁸⁸

March 1987 U.S. Fiberglass Products Inc. relocated from Virginia Beach to Point Harbor, Currituck County, North Carolina. The company manufactures handmade surfboards that sell up and down the East Coast as well Puerto Rico, Spain, the Canary Islands and Japan, and are recognized by the iconic logo of five overlapping porpoises aligned in a circle. Two showrooms exist in Virginia Beach, Virginia and at Kitty Hawk at surf shops under the same name, Wave Riding Vehicles. The expanded business has also operated stores in Haleiwa, Hawaii since 2004 and Isabella, Puerto Rico since 2008. The original company started in Virginia Beach in 1967.⁸⁹

April 1987 Mike and Lani Crews open a surf shop in Emerald Isle, Carteret County also called Hot Wax Surf Shop but not in connection with the Paul brothers. Mike, a Carteret County native, starting surfing in 1960 in Atlantic Beach. Mike and friends would swim across Bogue Sound from Morehead City to Bogue Banks in order to spend time on the beach. After a busy career of working in the action sports wholesale business Mike and Lani decided to return to Emerald Isle and open their business. Hot Wax Surf Shop was one of the earlier shops in Carteret County to give a report on surf conditions to let surfers know how good the waves were. Their report was given over a local radio station three times a day. They also were one of the first businesses to offer surfing lessons through an instructional surf camp offered to beginners. Over the course of operating the surf camp Hot Wax instructors have taught over 10,000 people how to surf.⁹⁰

February 1988

Todd Holland, a North Carolina native, was recognized as the 1987 Rookie of the Year by the Association of Surfing Professionals, the governing body for professional competitive surfers around the globe. Born in Winston-Salem, North Carolina in 1968 Todd and his family eventually re-located in 1972 to Emerald Isle, where he learned to surf. The Holland's moved again in 1981 to Cocoa Beach, Florida where Todd continued honing his surfing skills. After placing well in several U.S. surfing championships and a World Championship at the boy's and junior's level, he went professional just after graduating high school. Todd competed at this level in contests around the world until 1998. Ten years later he was inducted into the East Coast Surfing Hall of Fame.⁹¹

January 1989

Randy Hall, the first reported surfer to be bitten by a hammerhead shark in North Carolina, and girlfriend Debbie Bell opened a surfboard repair business in Rodanthe. The Rodanthe Surf Shop grew to more than just ding repairs. Surfboards under the label Hatteras Glass were handmade there by Randy Hall and Robert 'Redman' Manville, a well-known shaper from California who also shaped surfboards for Wave Riding Vehicles.⁹²

April 1989

Chris Jones and Charles Kemp both of Morehead City, Carteret County open Surf Zone surf shop in Atlantic Beach. Chris got into making surfboards in 1986 which was one of the motivating factors in opening a shop. His boards were sold under the label Heat Wave Surfboards. By the next year Chris left the business but Wes Whitt bought his half of the operation, local surfing lawyer, eventual District Court Judge, Paul Quinn handled the paperwork for the transaction. Wes along with several others put together the inaugural Bette Marsh Longboard Classic competition in 1993. The shop was

eventually sold and was renamed the Water Company Surf Shop. Chris continued to shape surfboards but under the name Chris Jones Surfboards. He also does the fiber-glassing work for another Carteret County shaper Carl Heverly of Emerald Isle.

That same month George Howard of Richlands, Onslow County started shaping surfboards under the label GT Surf Sticks, later renamed Howard Surfboards. In 1997 he would open On Shore Surf Shop in Surf City on Topsail Island, Pender County. The shop was located on the old lot of a mini-golf and arcade and added a third option for surfers looking to buy a board on Topsail Island, Bert's Surf Shop and Spinnaker Surf and Sport were the other two. An earlier shop that only lasted a few years operated in the area in the 1960's, known as Endless Bummer. On Shore Surf Shop hosts several annual surfing competitions on the island, the Earth and Surf Fest, the King of the Peak contest and Get Your Glide On competition. They also sponsor a local surf team that competes in Eastern Surfing Association events. In addition to the competitive aspect of the sport, On Shore Surf Shop is involved in Surfers Healing events that benefit children with autism.⁹³

May 1989 Tony Malouf opens Tony's Surf Shop in Atlantic Beach, Carteret County.⁹⁴

August 1989 North Carolinian Bobby Webb returned from Cocoa Beach, Florida where he had been shaping surfboards for ten years. Bobby relocated his Action Surfboards to his home turf, Carteret County. There was a second location that eventually opened in Nicaragua where Bobby had family ties. Some of his early work with foam and fiber-glass was while he worked at Atlantic Beach Surf Shop in the late 70's repairing surfboard dings. Bobby moved to Oahu, Hawaii for a year where he gained more experience working on

surfboards. He continued making ding repairs and also foiled fins, fine tuning the rough cut fins before they are fiber-glassed to the surfboard. Eventually ending up in Florida, Bobby worked for Claude Codgins CC Rider surfboards, Steve Holloway Lightwave Surfboards and Bill Everwine's Lip Quencher Surfboards. After much convincing from fellow shapers Jeff Haney and Kurt and Jim Wilson he started Action Surfboards in November of 1980 in Cocoa Beach. At its peak, Action Surfboards produced up to 2,500 boards a year, they were sold in shops from Maine to Florida and Puerto Rico. Along the way Bobby sponsored many North Carolina surfers in order to help them in the competitive realm. Buddy Pelletier was one of the big names to ride an Action board, as well as many Tar Heel women like Beth Schub, Mindy Ballou-Fitzpatrick, Sara Willis and Kelly Nicely. The same year Bobby returned to North Carolina one of his team riders, Bill Roach of Morehead City, took first place in the Men's Senior Division at the East Coast Surfing Championships. Over the years Bobby shaped for various labels even though he had his own, these included; Ron Jon Surfboards (Florida), Quick Sticks(Florida), Wave Weapons (Florida), Outer Banks Surfboards (North Carolina), Hatteras Glass (North Carolina), Wave Riding Vehicles (North Carolina) and Hotline Surfboards (Virginia Beach). ⁹⁵

March 1990 Aussie Island Surf Shop is opened in Wilmington, New Hanover County. Brothers Dean and Jim Lassiter are the owners of the business. A second location would eventually open in Wrightsville Beach in 2012. The shop carries surfboards made by local shapers Shawn O'Donnell and East Coast Hall of Fame surfer Will Allison. ⁹⁶

August 1991 A Surfrider Foundation chapter was started for the Outer Banks region. The parent organization was started in

1984 by a group of surfers in Malibu, California that were concerned with human health risks and environmental threats related to coastal development and pollution. Though the primary focus is on protection of coastal environments and beach access, the group also conducts charitable and educational programs that benefit the community and teach students about ocean safety and coastal ecology. Eventually more chapters of the organization would open up in North Carolina, including Bogue Banks, Cape Fear, Topsail Island and a University of North Carolina Wilmington chapter.⁹⁷

August 1991 North Carolina surfers took first place in several divisions at the Annual East Coast Surfing Championships held in Virginia Beach; some were firsts for Tar Heel surfers. Craig Lewis of Atlantic Beach is the first North Carolinian to place at the top in the Men's Shortboard Division. Lynn Shell of Buxton placed first in Men's Senior and young Justin Schub of Emerald Isle is the first North Carolinian to win first in the Menhune Division for ages 11 and under.⁹⁸

April 1992 Ted Kearns and Rascoe Hunt form Gale Force Glassing a surfboard manufacturing business in Kill Devil Hills, Dare County. The operation had been going on for several years but became legitimate after moving into Ocean Commerce Park a suitable location for light industrial operations. Another talented shaper to work for the outfit was Scooter Halladay who also created surfboards under the label Bone Surfboards⁹⁹

July 1993 Young Dare County surfer Jesse Hines takes first place in the Boys division at the Fourth Annual Eastern Surfing Association Virginia-Outer Banks Challenge held at Frisco on Hatteras Island. Jesse competed well in local contests but really excelled in big wave riding and surfing in the barrel of pitching waves. He would

eventually make a professional career out of surfing for the camera with sponsors vying to put their logo on his surfboard. Jesse's first cover shot on an international surfing magazine was published in the November 2003 issue of Transworld Surf. In January 2009 he did it again with the cover shot of the January issue of Surfer Magazine, an internationally circulated periodical. Despite the often very good waves that occur on the North Carolina coast, the cover photo was taken at Panama City, Florida during the 2008 hurricane season. Swells from distant Hurricane Gustav in the Gulf of Mexico were providing excellent waves for surfing along the beaches of the Florida panhandle. Jesse's big wave skills were documented in November 2007 when he surfed a large wave breaking past the end of the Avalon Pier in Kill Devil Hills. Photographer Ryan Kingsbury snapped a shot of Jesse as he made the turn at the bottom of the massive wave after dropping in. The image was the first ever entry from the East Coast in the annual Billabong XXL Biggest Wave of the year challenge, where surfers across the globe try to surf the biggest possible waves for a chance at winning prize money.¹⁰⁰

August 1993

North Carolinians began a sixteen year streak of placing first in various divisions of the Annual East Coast Surfing Championships. The list of winning surfers includes Lynn Shell (Senior Men 1993), David Sledge (Grand Masters 1994, 1999, Legends 2005, 2006), Mindy Ballou (Women's 1994, 1995), Justin Schub (Juniors 1995, 1996), Matt Hardesty (Menehune 1995, Junior Longboard 1997), M.J. Marsh (Juniors 1997), Will Allison (Grand Masters Shortboard 1997), Ben Bourgeois (Juniors 1998), Erick Schub (Juniors Men 1999), Shane Upchurch (Men's Open 1999, Juniors 2001), Hunter Lupton (Men's Longboard 1999, 2000, 2003, 2004, Pro Men's Longboard 2001, Open Longboard 2002), Richard Gilligan (Juniors 2000), Tim McAuliffe (Junior Longboard 2000), Sara Willis (Women's Long-

board, 2000, Senior Women's, 2002), Chris Curry (Open Shortboard 2000), Michael Powell (Boys 2002), Jimmy Mendillo (Open Shortboard 2006), Jesse McCrery (Open Shortboard, 2004, Masters 2008), Tony Silvagni (Menhune Longboard 2001, Junior Longboard 2002, 2003, Pro Men's Longboard 2003, 2005, 2007, Open Longboard 2003, Men's Longboard 2005, 2006, 2007, Men's Shortboard 2006), Elizabeth Basnight (Juniors Women's Longboard 2001), Kelly Nicely (Pro Women's Longboard 2005), Chris Crockett (Masters Longboard 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009), Nick Rupp (Boy's Shortboard 2007), Stevie Pittman (Menhune 2008), Owen Moffett (Mens 2008), Ty Roach (Open Longboard 2009).¹⁰¹

September 1993 Ben Bourgeois of Wrightsville Beach began his efforts that would lead to competing on the professional level of surfing. He placed first in the Boy's Division at The Easterns® Championship in Salvo, North Carolina. The contest was almost called off due to Hurricane Emily. In the aftermath of this weather event, contest organizers decided to donate some of the money raised from the competition to repair the Cape Hatteras High School. Competitors in the championship assist with repairs to hurricane damaged roof tops between surfing heats.¹⁰²

September 1994 Mindy Ballou of Morehead City is the first North Carolinian to win the Junior Women's Division of the Eastern Surfing Association's annual competition held on the Outer Banks, she would win the same title again in 1995. Just prior to the 1994 win Mindy took first in the Women's Division at the East Coast Surfing Championships in Virginia Beach where North Carolinian David Sledge of Morehead City won first in the Grand Masters division.¹⁰³

November 1994 Wrightsville Beach stand out Ben Bourgeois

won the Junior Division at the U.S. Amateur Surfing Championship in Sebastian Inlet, Florida and two years later was crowned World Junior Champion at the International Surfing Association World Games competition in Huntington Beach, California.¹⁰⁴

March 1996 Corolla Surf Shop is opened in Currituck County. At the time it was the northernmost surf shop along North Carolina's coast and the first ever to be opened in Corolla. Owned by Gary Smith the shop also housed the Nula Kae Surf Museum operated by curators Brant and Steve Wise.¹⁰⁵

July 1996 Atlantic Beach native MJ Marsh takes first place in the Boys Longboard division at the United States Surfing Championships at Ala Moana, Hawaii.¹⁰⁶

August 1996 In honor of the late Buddy Pelletier of Atlantic Beach, the Buddy Pelletier Surfing Scholarship Foundation was officially incorporated. The mission of the foundation is to provide scholastic and humanitarian aid for members of the East Coast surfing community. An annual Memorial Longboard Classic is held in Atlantic Beach every year in Buddy's honor with the proceeds going towards the Buddy Pelletier Foundation. By order of the Governor of the State of North Carolina, a specialized surfing themed North Carolina license plate was designed and can be purchased to support the organization. The plate has an image of Buddy surfing in his very recognizable style. The East Coast Surfing Championships would honor the Southern Gentleman as well by eventually creating a Buddy Pelletier Sportsmanship Award to be given out every year at the annual competition. Buddy Pelletier was inducted in the East Coast Surfing Hall of Fame in 2000.¹⁰⁷

December 1996 The Virginia Pilot, Norfolk, VA, runs an article on Noah Snyder of Kill Devil Hills, Dare County that describes his quick rise to professional surfing. Noah competed in surfing competitions at a young age and placed very well. His early professional career was supported mostly by national and international surfboard and surfing merchandise companies that provided him with surfboards, wetsuits and other surfing equipment. Some of Noah's sponsoring companies also covered travel expenses to surfing destinations around the world for promoting their products and to conduct photo shoots of Noah surfing. Professional surfing is not like other major league sports though, both Noah and longtime friend and fellow professional surfer Jesse Hines, also of Dare County, still had to find ways to pay the bills, whether it was laying tile or construction work both surfers worked pretty hard to survive in the professional world of surfing.¹⁰⁸

August 1997 An informal get-together held at Wrightsville Beach as a tribute to a late friend was the start of an annual East Coast Wahine Championship of Surfing. A first of its kind event designed by and for women surfers from Maine to Florida, the annual event ran every year until 2011 and was one of the largest of its kind in the country.¹⁰⁹

September 1997 Tammy Kennedy placed first in the Junior Women's Division at the annual ESA Championships in Buxton. The Wilmington, North Carolina resident, originally from Florida, competed within the Southern North Carolina District of the Mid-Atlantic region for the ESA, which covers the area from Surf City, Pender County to the State line in Brunswick County.¹¹⁰

October 1999 The annual Easterns® Surfing Championship was postponed for the first time in 32 years due to Hurricane Floyd.

The event is held in October after some of the storm damage was cleaned up. In the water, Carteret County surfers clean up the Girls Division, Junior Men's and Masters Longboard with Sara Willis, MJ Marsh and Paul Poston taking top honors, respectively. Conditions for part of the contest were some of the biggest waves ever recorded at the annual event. Longtime Florida surfer Howie Lions was caught up against the sea groin during his heat and began to drown but was thankfully rescued by Paul and fellow surfers Bill Hume Sr., Jed Davis and Jeff Clements who were all recognized for the heroic save by the contest judges and Eastern Surf Magazine.¹¹¹

October 1999 State health officials gave the all clear on ocean water quality for swimmers and surfers in the Cape Fear region after three weeks of testing water samples for bacteria following Hurricane Floyd. The massive amount of rain from the storm washes everything, including contaminants off the land and into the rivers and sounds allowing it to make its way to the ocean. Jimmy Benson, longtime owner of Cove Surf Shop in Carolina Beach, reported rumors of surfers falling ill but also talked to several that had been out in the waves since the storm passed without any issues.¹¹²

January 2000 The Coastland Times of Manteo, Dare County publishes an article on Hollywood Beach Surfboards. What sounds like a California operation is actually located in East Lake, North Carolina at Beety Lumber Company. The name is derived from a section of beach in Nags Head platted 'Hollywood Beach'. Bill Beety, along with Will Brooks, started making wooden surfboards at the Beety Lumber Company in 1996 as an experiment. They used local wood such as juniper, holly and cedar to construct the hollow surfboards. This wasn't Bill's first surfboard making venture though, he crafted a few foam and fiberglass boards while attending college in Santa Barbara, California in

the late 1960s before returning to North Carolina to operate a sawmill in Knightdale, Wake County. The wooden boards of Hollywood Beach are taken to Gale Force Glassing for finishing.¹¹³

August 2000

Pride Surf Shop opens in Wilmington, New Hanover County. The store name is derived from a new label of surfboard created by Dave Endress.¹¹⁴

September 2000

Early 21st Century wins by North Carolinians at the annual Eastern Surfing Association Championships in Dare County include: 2000 Chris Crockett – Mens Longboard; 2001 Sarah Willis – Junior Womens; 2002 Patti Hook – Senior Womens, Hunter Lupton – Mens Longboard; 2003 Drake Courie – Menhune Longboard, Kelly Nicely – Womens, Brian Carpenter – Masters, Mindy Fitzpatrick – Senior Womens, Mike Beveridge – Senior Mens; 2004 Tony Silvagni – Junior Longboard, Kelly Nicely – Womens Longboard and Womens Shortboard, Nick Rupp – Menhune, Brad Musselmann – Masters Longboard, Bill Roach – Legends Longboard, David Sledge – Legends, Slater Powell – Mens; 2005 Leilani Pickett – Girls, Kelly Nicely – Womens, Beth Schub – Senior Womens, Rob Cordero – Mens; 2006 Nick Rupp – Boys, Leilani Pickett – Junior Womens, Ty Roach – Mens Longboard, Jo Pickett – Ladies Shortboard, Pat McManus – Masters, David Sledge – Legends; 2007 Weston Williams – Menhune, Nick Rupp – Boys, Jesse Fernandez – Grand Masters, Bill Roach – Legends and Legends Longboard, Ty Roach – Mens Longboard, Mindy Fitzpatrick – Ladies Longboard; 2008 Nick Rupp – Junior Mens, David Sledge – Legends, Asher King – Junior Longboard, Ty Roach – Mens Longboard, Bill Roach – Legends Longboard; 2009 Nick Rupp – Junior Mens, Mindy Fitzpatrick – Ladies, Jesse Fernandez – Legends Longboard, Jo Pickett – Ladies Longboard, Owen Moffett – Open Shortboard; 2010 Nick Rupp – Junior Mens, Slater Powell – Masters, Reese Patterson – Grand Mas-

ters, Steven Mangiacapre – Mens Longboard.¹¹⁵

September 2001 Transworld Surf magazine online published an article on Vitamin Sea Surf Shop located in Kill Devil Hills, Dare County. The shop was opened in 1977 by Duncan Currie and Lisa Noonan.¹¹⁶

March 2002 Hatteras Island Board Sports opened in Avon on Hatteras Island in Dare County by brothers Kevin and Drew Scalia. Though actually formed in 2001 the shop didn't open until the following year. The first sale at the new business even occurred before the business was up and running, a bar of surf wax. The shop would eventually carry surfboards made by local shaper Mark Newton.

That same month, the Cape Fear Surfing Archive at the William Randall Library, University of North Carolina Wilmington was created. The archives collections focus primarily on preserving the heritage of surfing along North Carolina's southeastern coast although some materials reflect surfing history at the regional, national and international level. Peter Fritzler, UNCW Science Librarian and Joseph 'Skipper' Funderburg Co-Curator began sharing information and painstakingly pieced materials together to show how surfing evolved in the region.

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July 2002 The Buddy Pelletier Surfing Foundation Outreach Clinic held its first event on Bogue Banks in Carteret County. The focus of the clinic was to teach people how to surf while raising money for the Foundation to support storm victims and provide scholarships. After a few years of running the clinic as a fundraiser the project started to work more with underprivileged youth by providing them free surfing lessons and lessons in encouraging and supporting one another.

That same month, Sara Willis placed first in the Junior Women's Shortboard Division at the 42nd Annual United States Surfing Championship held in Oceanside, California. She would head back east and win first in the Senior Women's Division of the Eastern Surfing Championships in Virginia Beach. Fellow North Carolinians that placed in the U.S. Championships included Shane Upchurch (Jr. Mens) and Hunter Lupton (Mens and Open Mens Longboard).¹¹⁸

September 2003 Hurricane Isabel slammed into Hatteras Island on September 18th as a Category 2 storm, slicing through the island just north of Hatteras village, isolating town residents that rode out the storm at home. Because almost all of North Carolina's best surfing waves are dependent on sand bars or barrier island spits, any change in their shape or location can create new breaks or surfing spots. During the process of dredging sand to fill in the gap, a nice break for surfing formed on the north side of the cut. The short window of opportunity for this temporary spot coincided with perfect conditions, a swell out of the southeast and northerly offshore winds.¹¹⁹

October 2003 *Eastern Surf Magazine* committed a whole issue to the female side of surfing with their Wahine Issue. The centerpiece article focused on the state of women's surfing along the eastern seaboard, including results from the annual East Coast Wahine Championships of 2003 in Wrightsville Beach. Some of the North Carolinians featured in the issue included Beth Schub, Isabella Cepelcha, Kelly Nicely, Mindy Ballou-Fitzpatrick, Maggie Willis and Sara Willis.¹²⁰

January 2004 University of North Carolina at Wilmington History professor, Dr. William D. Moore, taught "History of Surfing" class in the spring semester. The Harvard alumni went on to teach at



Kelly Nicely of Broad Creek, Carteret County competed in many surfing tournaments in the early 2000s including the 2003 U.S. Championships in Oceanside, California and the 2004 Junior Surfing Championships in Papenoo, Tahiti. This image was from the East Coast Wahine Championships held in Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County. Photo by Brian Maglietta, courtesy of Anne Weber.

Boston University in the Department of History of Art and Architecture and American and New England Studies. Dr. Moore taught a course there titled "Surfing and American Culture."¹²¹

June 2004

Tony Silvagni of Kure Beach, New Hanover County places first in the Junior Longboard division at the inaugural American Surfing Championships in Huntington Beach, California. This was the first of many national and international wins for Tony and his surfing career. Other highlights include: 2009 Team USA, Gold medal, International Surfing Association World Surfing Games in Costa Rica; 2011 Longboard division and Team USA Gold Medal, World Surfing Games in Panama; 2011 First place, Association of Surfing Professionals (ASP) Malibu Hyuga Pro, Japan; 2012 National Scholastic Surfing Association (NSSA) National Collegiate Longboard Champion; 2012 First place Longboard division NSSA National Interscholastic Championships Salt Creek, California; 2012 First place Guy Takayama Pro, Oceanside, California; 2013 Taiwan Open of Surfing Noseriding Champion. In 2014 between March and September he would take first place in nine different competitions across the globe from Sayulita, Mexico to Belmar, New Jersey. In 2015 he would win the Men's Longboard qualifying series at the Taiwan Open of Surfing in Jinzun Harbor, Taiwan. In addition to competing at the sport, Tony opened a surf school to teach people of all ages how to ride the waves.¹²²

July 2004

The North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort hosted a surf camp for young women at Cape Lookout National Seashore. The overnight four day camp covered lessons in safety, first aid, surfing history, surfing etiquette, paddling and duck-diving as well as lessons on marine biology and environmental stewardship. The lead instructor, Elizabeth Basnight, was a well accomplished surfer who had competed in the Eastern Surfing Association, placed second

in the Jr. Women's division and first in Jr. Women's Longboard at the 2001 East Coast Championships and even competed in the 2002 United States Surfing Championships in California. Several local surf shops helped fund the camp, including Marsh's Surf Shop, AB Surf Shop and Hot Wax Surf Shop.¹²³

August 2004 Ocean Isle Beach resident, Jesse McCrery, won the Open Shortboard Division at the 42nd Annual East Coast Surfing Championships. Also a surfboard shaper, Jesse began making surfboards in 1999 and are now sold under the label JM surfboards.¹²⁴

September 2004 At The Easterns ® in Cape Hatteras, a group of surfers from the Southern North Carolina District outperformed the competition. Slater Powell, Surf City (Men's Shortboard), Shea Lindon, Wilmington (Women's Bodyboard), Tony Silvagni, Kure Beach (Junior Longboard), and Nick Rupp, Ocean Isle Beach (Men's Longboard) all place first in their respective divisions. The Southern North Carolina District of ESA finishes 2nd overall in competition. Other North Carolinians that take home first place include Kelly Nicely (Women's Longboard and Shortboard), Mark Ramsdell (Men's Bodyboard), Bill Roach (Legends Longboard) and David Sledge (Legends).¹²⁵

October 2004 The first annual Wave Riding Vehicles Outer Banks Pro contest is held in Kitty Hawk, Dare County at the Kitty Hawk Pier. The competition is an official World Surfing League QS 1000 Event which acts as a stepping stone for surfers looking to make it into the professional realm of surfing. Surfers from as far away as Puerto Rico, Venezuela and Brazil have competed in the annual event since it first started.¹²⁶

December 2004 North Carolinians, Kelly Nicely and Tony Sil-

vagni, were selected to join 29 other surfers as members of the 2004 USA Surf Team (July 23-25). They went on to compete at the ISA World Junior Surfing Championships in Papenoo, Tahiti held in December.¹²⁷

June 2006 Whalebone Surf Shop was recognized by the Surf Industry Manufacturers Association (SIMA) as one of the Nation's top five surf shops for their 2005 Image Award. Selected shops showed exemplary service to their customers through staff, store and product offerings and best represented surf culture and vibe through merchandising. Owners of the shop, Jim and April Vaughn attended the annual SIMA Surf Summit in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico to celebrate the nomination. Whalebone Surf Shop has supported the community with many events, including County surf camps for youth, Surfing for Autism awareness events and Waves for Warriors to benefit military service members and families.¹²⁸

July 2006 Patrick McManus, from Dare County, took first place in the Masters division at the United States Surfing Championships at Oceanside, California. He would repeat the victory the following year at the same event held at Huntington Beach, California. Other North Carolinians that competed in the events and placed in the top five were, Hunter Heverly (3rd, Boys under 18 division, 2006), Fisher Heverly (3rd, Boys under 16 division, 2006) and Zach Kenny (4th, Mens division, 2007).¹²⁹

August 2006 Surfers Healing, a surfing camp for children with autism was held at Wrightsville Beach. The parent organization originated in San Juan Capistrano, California in 1996 and was started by professional surfer Israel Paskowitz. The experience of riding the waves is believed to provide a therapeutic effect for the children. In

April 2010, a similar organization and event was created on the Outer Banks under the name “Surfing for Autism.”¹³⁰

November 2007 Hurricane Noel, a Category 1 storm with maximum sustained winds of 85 miles per hour, passed up the East Coast of the United States between the Carolinas and Bermuda before making landfall in Nova Scotia. The late season hurricane was responsible for over two hundred deaths, making it the deadliest storm of the 2007 season. On November 3rd and 4th, storm driven swells generated by Hurricane Noel caused large waves along the coast, with especially heavy surf in the vicinity of Cape Hatteras. Daniel Pullen, a reporter for a local newspaper, the *Island Free Press*, wrote of the surf, “Although the waves on Saturday were definitely paddle-worthy, the Jet Ski made waves that were inaccessible, accessible. The waves were breaking about ½ mile to ¾ mile from the shore. In a nutshell, the guys were tow-in surfing Diamond Shoals. Wave heights were estimated by surfers out in the water at about 15 to 25 feet with a few 30 footers breaking way outside.”¹³¹

February 2008 An exhibit at the William Randall Library, University of North Carolina Wilmington on surfing titled “Country Soul: The Surfing Experience in Southeastern North Carolina” offered a glimpse into the vibrant world of surfing in the Tarheel State. The exhibit featured vintage surfboards from local shapers, t-shirts, posters, photographs, newspaper clippings, and related surf ephemera, the exhibit chronicled the region’s surf history from the early 1960s to the present and celebrates a colorful cast of individuals who transformed surfing from a small countercultural phenomenon into a diverse increasingly mainstream sport. The exhibit represented five years of work by Peter Fritzler, UNCW Science Librarian and Joseph ‘Skipper’ Funderburg Co-Curator.¹³²



Surfer and photographer Doug Waters captured this shot of Bobby Webb surfing at the Sportsman's Pier in Atlantic Beach, circa 1980. This photo was taken with one of Doug's early cameras in a water proof housing. Doug was inducted in the East Coast Surfing Hall of Fame for his surfing photography that appeared in many international surfing magazines.

May 2008 Joseph “Skipper” Funderburg of Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County published *Surfing on the Cape Fear Coast*, the first book to examine the history of surfing in North Carolina.¹³³

December 2008 Surfing Magazine online does a month long expose on surfboard shapers across the country. Jesse Fernandez is the only North Carolinian represented in a list of twenty one different shapers from Florida, California and Hawaii. Jesse has shaped surfboards for Wave Riding Vehicles along with other talented board makers Bob Yinger, Mike Clark and Tommy Moore.¹³⁴

January 2010 Photographer Doug Waters is inducted into the East Coast Surfing Hall of Fame. Originally from New Bern, Craven County, Doug started surfing at the age of 12. While living in Hawaii in the mid-1970s he got interested in surf photography. By the early 1980s Doug was getting his shots published in East Coast surf magazines and eventually West Coast magazines. In the mid-1990s he became the senior staff photographer for *Surfing Magazine*. A photo he took of North Carolina surfer Buddy Pelletier was used for the artwork on the North Carolina specialty license plate that supports the Buddy Pelletier Surfing Foundation.¹³⁵

May 2010 Benjamin Bourgeois was the first surfer to be inducted into the Greater Wilmington Sports Hall of Fame. He started surfing at a very young age and entered his first contest when he was only six years old. After placing first in the Junior and Boys division level at many competitions in the 1990s he took off into the professional realm of surfing. Some of his various twenty first century wins and accolades include: competing on the 2001, 2003 and 2008 World Championship Tours, Gold for the East team at the 2003 X-Games, First on

the 6th stage of the Latin and Caribbean Surfing Tour 2006, Rip Curl Boardmasters World Qualifying Series 2007, First at the Nike Lowers Pro 2008 and Second in 2009, Gold for Team USA at the International Surfing Association World Surfing Games 2009, First place at the Outer Banks Pro 2009 and 2011, First place for Team Sweetwater at the Surf Shop challenge National Championship 2011, First place at the Belmar Pro 2013, 2014, 2015 and the Sweetwater Pro –Am 2014. Ben was also featured on the cover of over ten national and international surfing magazines including *Surfer Magazine*, *Transworld Surf*, *Eastern Surf Magazine* and *Surfing Magazine*.¹³⁶

October 2010 Kure Beach lifeguard Thomas Cannon is the first known surfer in the world to attempt a 24 hour continuous surfing marathon. Unfortunately due to weather related issues he was unable to reach the goal. But because he was the first one to attempt such a feat his time of 15 hours set the record. Florida surfer Kurtis Loftus of Jacksonville Beach, Florida topped Cannon's effort in October 2011, catching waves for 29 hours and 1 minute. But in August 2014 fellow Kure Beach surfer Ben Shaw became the new record holder by spending 29 hours and 10 minutes in the water catching waves that rolled his way. Ben's record breaking surf session also helped to raise money for Ocean Cure, a non-profit organization dedicated to giving free surfing lessons to those with physical disabilities, mental impairments or who have suffered emotional trauma. The North Carolina reign for holding the record of longest surfing session came to an end in 2015 when South African Josh Enslin topped Ben's record, surfing for 30 hours and 11 minutes at Pollock Beach, Port Elizabeth in Africa's Eastern Cape Province.¹³⁷

March 2011 Rocky Godwin opens 50 South Surf Shop on Topsail Island in Surf City, Pender County. Rocky grew up surfing at At-

lantic Beach, Carteret County and purchased his first surfboard from Tommy Morrow at the original Atlantic Beach Surf Shop.¹³⁸

July 2012 Wrightsville Beach was named one of the world's top 20 surfing locales in an adventure blog by Tetsuhiko Endo for *National Geographic's* website. The list was published on Endo's online blog and only included two other East Coast locations from the United States.¹³⁹

May 2013 The *Star News* of Wilmington reported that several surfers rescued two young men from a dangerous rip current at Carolina Beach. The surfers happened to be in the vicinity as they were working with a film production, providing surfing expertise, water safety and as background extras. One of the surfers was Shawn O'Donnell, a local surfboard shaper who operates Wrightsville Glassing where his surfboards under the label SOD are produced. Fellow rescuer Travis Leftwich also worked at the surfboard company.¹⁴⁰

July 2013 Surfline, the premier surf forecasting and surf report organization in the world, opens an office in Kitty Hawk, Dare County. Representatives had already been working in the area since the early 2000s. Founded by Sean Collins of California in the late 1970s, by the 1980s Surfline was providing weather and wave forecasts not only to surfers but to lifeguard agencies, the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Navy Seals and the National Weather Service.¹⁴¹

September 2014 North Carolinians who placed first in their divisions at the 2014 Easterns® included Kat Neff (Southern District) Junior Women's Longboard; David Taylor (Central District) Men's Longboard; Noah Futrell (Outer Banks District) Menhune Longboard; Beth Schub (Central District) Ladies Longboard.¹⁴²

February 2015

During a ceremony at the City National Grove in Anaheim, California, twenty of the country's longest-standing surf shops were awarded the Surf Industry Manufacturers Association Surf Shop Gold Wave Award for their longevity, contribution to surf culture and dedication to surfing communities across the nation. Two North Carolina shops make the list, Atlantic Beach Surf Shop (AB Surf Shop) and Bert's Surf Shop in Kinston. To qualify for the award shops must have been in operation for at least fifty consecutive years.¹⁴³

May 2015

North Carolina Highway Historical Marker Committee approved placing historical marker in Wrightsville Beach commemorating Burke Bridgers and early surfing activities along the Cape Fear coast.¹⁴⁴

September 2015

Governor Pat McCrory issued a proclamation designating September as Surfing Month in North Carolina. The Governor affixed the Great Seal of North Carolina to highlight Surfing in North Carolina because of its pioneer history, popularity and regular recognition of excellence, its strong communities, surfing events, surfing competitions and businesses, University of North Carolina Wilmington's surfing collection, the North Carolina Maritime Museum's surfing exhibit, the Wrightsville Beach Museums Waterman Hall of Fame, and declared Wrightsville Beach as the Birthplace of Surfing in North Carolina.¹⁴⁵

October 2015

Surfers Will Allison, Ben Bourgeois and Joseph "Skipper" Funderburg, were inducted into the Wrightsville Beach Waterman Hall of Fame. Surfer Cissie Brooks receives the Woman of the Year Award. The inductees were selected by the Wrightsville Beach Museum of History board members.



John Hairr and Ben Wunderly with a juniper surfboard built to the specifications of Alexander Hume Ford's directions contained in his *Collier's Weekly* article published in 1909. Boards such as this were utilized by surfing pioneers Burke Bridgers at Wrightsville Beach, NC and Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Johnson in Daytona Beach, FL in August of 1909. The juniper surfboard experiment was conducted in the winter of 2016 in order to answer several questions relating to the old North Carolina surfboards described in the written records, of which none from the early twentieth century survive. This surfboard was built in the Watercraft Center of the NC Maritime Museum in Beaufort, and is now part of the museum's surfing exhibit.

That same month saw the unveiling of an official North Carolina Highway Historical Marker for Pioneer East Coast Surfing at Wrightsville Beach. The marker was placed on Waynick Boulevard across from Bridgers Street in Wrightsville Beach. The marker commemorates the historic event of early organized surfing at Wrightsville Beach in 1909, by Burke Haywood Bridgers, who organized surfers, rode surfboards and promoted surfing activities at Wrightsville Beach. He founded the earliest verifiable surfing movement and community in North Carolina. Advocate for the marker, author Skipper Funderburg, applied to the State of North Carolina to recognize the historical significance of surfing in North Carolina and its place within the rich cultural fabric of the Carolina coast by making the historical plaque.¹⁴⁶

January 2016 The University of North Carolina Wilmington offers a trial course, “The Physics of Surfing,” through the physics department taught by Dr. Dylan McNamara. It focused on wave formation, surfboard dynamics and how different parts of the surfboard function.¹⁴⁷

April 2016 Exhibit describing the history of the sport of surfing in North Carolina opened at the North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort.

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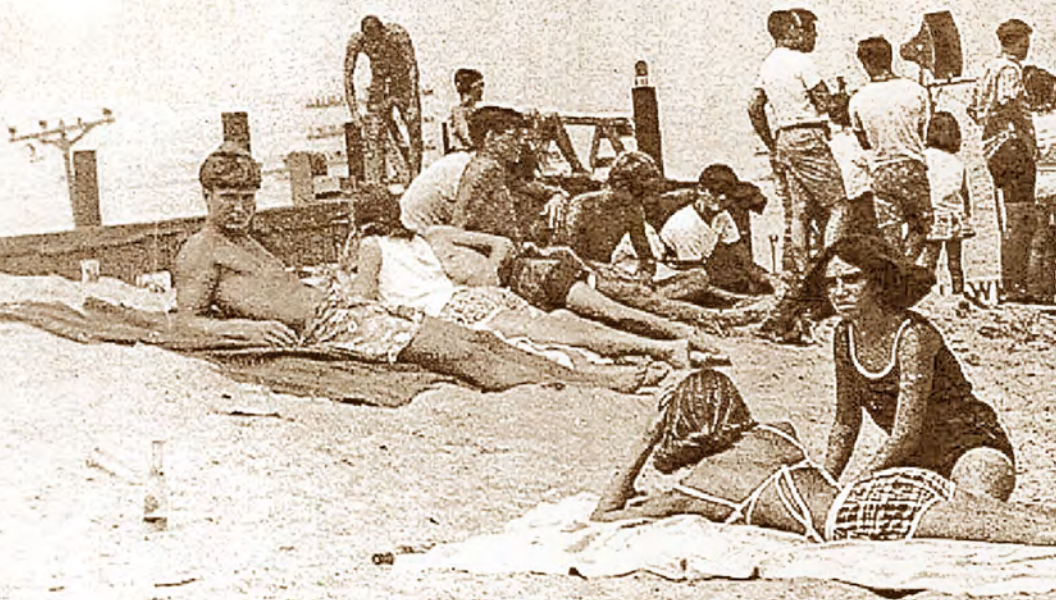
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Surfboards are often used for practical purposes other than recreation. Here UNC Wilmington graduate student Cobi Christiansen places a data-logging drifter in the surf off Carolina Beach. The drifter uses GPS technology to measure the effects of tides and currents, and was placed here as part of a project to learn more about the dangers of rip currents. Photo courtesy Kurt Christiansen/North Carolina Sea Grant.



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