CHAPTER 6

The Hui O He‘e Nalu

The predominantly Native Hawaiian North Shore organization, Hui O He‘e Nalu, was formed in reaction to a burgeoning, predominantly haole professional surfing industry that started on the North Shore in 1976. For Hui members, this industry threatened a Hawaiian pastime, social sanctuary, and cultural identity. The Hui O He‘e Nalu was first created by a group of North Shore Hawaiian surfers at a home near Sunset Beach. As their membership grew in the late 1970s and early 1980s, their purpose remained the same: to resist the exploitation of the North Shore by haole surfers and the surfing industry. They challenged this professional industry first through protest, then through compromise. The Hui helped reduce the number of competitions held on the North Shore, gained access to profits from these events, and provided activities and services for the North Shore community. The club, still in existence today, has evolved over the years. Despite such fluidity, he‘e nalu (surfing) has remained the glue that holds the membership together. For Hui members, he‘e nalu is a cultural and indigenous pastime, something they have strongly identified with as Hawaiians. Considering the context of Hawai‘i in 1976—a period of intense Native activism and cultural rejuvenation—as well as the history of Hawaiian resistance against foreign conquest in the surf zone since the overthrow of the Hawaiian kingdom, Hawaiian members of the Hui O He‘e Nalu were products of both their past and their present. Thus they engaged with waves of resistance to protect their identity, culture, and space from further conquest. While Hui aggressiveness in

preserving their space in the surf has often been seen as excessive, one cannot divorce the Hui from the colonial history that gave birth to them. While acts of violence, even by Hawaiians, at the time are deplorable, critics of Hawaiian aggressiveness conveniently ignore the violence inflicted on Hawaiians for centuries and refuse to recognize how these abuses have shaped the Hui.

Because a history of the Hui O He'e Nalu has not been previously written, my first objective here is to record a cohesive historical narrative. Since I am primarily constructing this narrative from oral history interviews, this chapter emphasizes individual perspectives and issues of identity from a predominantly Hawaiian constituency. Also, while this chapter establishes the narrative and amplifies Native voices, chapter 7 will analyze deeper issues on the politics of identity, representation, and media stereotyping.

Professional Surf History on the North Shore

In 1976 the North Shore of O'ahu was the birthplace of a professional surfing tour now called the Association of Surfing Professionals (ASP) World Tour. Although professional surfing existed a decade prior, it was far less energetic and ambitious. Starting in 1965, the Duke Kahanamoku Surfing Classic was the sole competition on the North Shore, and it was not technically a professional meet until it offered a cash prize of one thousand dollars to its winner in 1968. Later, the 1970 Smirnoff Pro and the 1971 Pipeline Masters joined the Duke Kahanamoku Surfing Classic. Although these earlier contests began attracting an international surfing contingency, they were still isolated events in the sense that they were not affiliated with a surf circuit, or series of surfing events. Also, the only way to get into these events was through invitation, and such invitations were limited, determined by contest officials, and based on a person's reputation in the surf on the North Shore. Although these three events made up the bulk of professional surfing competitions on the North Shore in the early 1970s, by 1977 there were twenty-four annually run surf meets (at various competitive levels) held on the North Shore.[1] It was amid this excitement that a professional surfing series was formed.

In 1976 two mainland-born and Honolulu-raised haole surfers, Fred Hemmings and Randy Rarick, started International Professional Surfers (IPS).[2] The first of its kind, the IPS was a circuit of professional surfing events that, through accumulated points, crowned an annual world surfing champion.[3] Among other things, the purpose of the IPS, according to Hemmings, was to "qualify surfing as a legitimate sport."[4] But they also

made money with these events—primarily from contest sponsors and television stations. Though considered jewels of the IPS crown, the North Shore events (e.g., the Pipeline Masters, the Duke Kahanamoku Classic, the Smirnoff Pro, and others) became part of a series of professional surfing contests that incorporated others from New Zealand, Australia, Florida, South Africa, and Brazil. As these events generated greater hype for surfing and the North Shore events were broadcast on American national television networks (such as ABC and NBC), the IPS opened millions of eyes to the O'ahu countryside.

The events on the North Shore, held at popular breaks like Sunset, Hale'iwa, Pipeline, and Laniakea, invited spectators and enticed would-be champion surfers from around the world to this pristine, seven-mile shoreline. In this way the events encouraged a large-scale migration—or for some surfers, pilgrimages—to the legendary North Shore surf. But for Native Hawaiians from the North Shore and adjacent communities, their far-from-Waikīkī neighborhoods were "being inundated with surfers from around the world, and" as one North Shore resident explained, "no one at the time knew how to deal with it."[5] While frustration in many local Hawaiians increased, for other Hawaiian surfers the competitions were opportunities to win accolades.

Chuck Waipā Andrus drops into a wave at Pipeline in the early 1980s, North Shore, O'ahu. (Courtesy of Chuck Andrus)

Like their ancestors of old, many Hawaiian surfers reveled and excelled in competitive surfing. In fact, Hawaiian surfers frequently outperformed other competitors in the North Shore contests during the late 1960s and 1970s. Among the more prominent surfers were Barry Kanaiaupuni, Reno Abellira, Clyde Aikau, Eddie Aikau, Larry Bertlemann, Buttons Kaluhiokalani, Michael Ho, and Dane Kealoha. Although Hawai'i surfers were known to dominate in the large Hawaiian waves, a young cohort of Australian surfers challenged these top Hawaiian surfers in the mid-1970s.

Young Australians and the Bronzed Aussies

Although Hawaiian surfers have "always led the way in progressive oceanic innovations," young Australian surfers began pushing competitive surfing performances.[6] In 1976 three of Australia's brightest surfers organized a team called the Bronzed Aussies. Consisting of Mark Warren, Peter Townend, and Ian Cairns, they were also among the top competitors in the new IPS series—one of them, Townend, won the first IPS world title. Inspired by an Australian trio that dominated professional tennis in the 1960s, the Bronzed Aussies felt they could grab more media attention and a stronger competitive edge as a unit. Through their "radical" approach to wave riding and their flamboyant fashion style on the beach—they often wore unusual jumpsuits to the surf contests—they found the attention they were looking for.[7] Though other Australian surfing professionals, like Wayne "Rabbit" Bartholomew, were not officially part of the team, the Bronzed Aussies' spirit characterized most Australian surfers on the North Shore at this time. First and foremost, they marketed themselves as aggressive and extremely competitive. After they claimed three of the seven IPS events on the North Shore in 1976, they started flaunting their success.

The young Australians strutted and ruffled a few feathers on the North Shore in 1975 and 1976. Although Hawaiian surfers won four of the seven IPS events in 1976, the Australian surfers boasted to the media how they had toppled a thousand-year Hawaiian surfing reign. Australian surfers gained a reputation for trash-talking, in and out of the water. In a 1977 surfer magazine article a fellow Australian surfer claimed that the Bronzed Aussies and Rabbit Bartholomew in particular were "absolute monster[s] in the water, [who] would continually cut people off."[8] Not only were they notoriously aggressive in the water, but the spirited Australians also paraded themselves as the world's greatest surfers in surfing media and claimed dominance over Hawaiian waves and Hawaiian surfers in newspaper articles and surfing

magazines.[9] In a letter, Rabbit Bartholomew boasted to Peter Townend (this letter eventually got into the hands of local surfers), saying, "We're as hot as shit over here, Australians are the biggest thing in surfing, they [Hawaiians] are looking to us for inspiration."[10] Even IPS contest director Fred Hemmings called them "provocative characters . . . with an aggressive style that did not endear them to the North Shore regulars." "In the short run," Hemmings continued, "they made business difficult."[11] Though some Australians, like Rabbit, later learned cultural sensitivity, in 1976 they enjoyed tooting their horns in true Bronzed Aussie–sportsman fashion.

During this time, local Hawai'i and Native Hawaiian surfers became less tolerant of Aussie attitudes and antics.[12] Several Hawaiian surfers were upset by Australian aggressiveness in the water and their claims of dominating the North Shore. Local Hawaiian surfers took to calling the Australians the "Bronzed A-holes."[13] Terry Ahue, a legendary Hawaiian surfer and lifeguard, characterized these surfers as "real arrogant kinds of people. They were called those days the Bronzed Aussies. . . . They were over here just like walking all over us. You know, with our kind heart and everything we give, and let them come here. But they started trying to take over everything. 'Oh we're this, we're that.' "[14] Another Hawaiian surfer said, "They came off as real arrogant and egotistical; they weren't well liked. It's one thing doing this in your own country, but to come do this in someone else's country is basically having no respect."[15]

Many Hawaiians also saw the Australians as racist. Ahue explained, "The problem was, they came over here and [were] like, 'Hawaiians get out of the way' . . . because the way they are brought up over there, they are real competitors. That's just their nature. But we were considered aborigines, I guess, when they came over here. So we were like a second race to them. So they thought they could just, White man rule, and take over. And we said screw this, this is not going to happen."[16] Many Hawaiian surfers learned firsthand about such racism while traveling on the IPS surf tour. Bryan Amona learned the reality of racism and segregation while in South Africa and related this treatment to the way Australians treated Hawaiians on the North Shore.

> In South Africa we weren't treated well at all. I mean, it depended on the color of your skin; if you were dark skinned you weren't treated well at all. They had the apartheid thing going on back then and they were very prejudiced. And all the lower-class people were the ones doing all the menial work, the servants, the waiters, and all that. These were all black people

> or Indian people who were in these jobs. And you go to a restaurant and they wouldn't serve us. They would look at us like, "What are you doing here?" You know, "You're just like me; I am not going to serve you. You don't belong here. You should be in another restaurant, or someplace else with your own kind." And coming from Hawai'i, we didn't understand that. Especially Dane [Kealoha] and I, we were like, "What's up?" We'd go into the restaurant and we'd be the first guys in the restaurant, but we'd be the last guys to get served. And the only way we'd get served is we'd ask our haole friends, like Buzzy Kerbox, "Hey could you order food for us, 'cause they're not serving us." They wouldn't serve us. And it was a big cultural shock going to use the restroom and there would be signs saying "Colored" and "Non-coloreds." I wouldn't know which one to use; I'd just walk into any one. And I'd get stink eye, like, "Hey, what are you doing here? You don't belong here." It was real different back then.[17]

Although Amona noted that South Africa was on the extreme end of racial prejudice, he still noted that "the Australians, they brought a lot of that

Bryan Amona, key founder of the Hui O He'e Nalu, at 'Ehukai Beach Park, 2008. (Photo by Mark Holladay Lee)

[racism] over [to Hawai'i]," but "Hawai'i is such a diverse bunch of people, there's no room for it. There's no room for prejudice; it just doesn't work over here. And they may want to try it, but it doesn't work."[18]

As frustration mounted in Hawaiians, the Australian surfers found themselves in a difficult position with a handful of Native Hawaiian surfers of the north and east sides of O'ahu.[19] Hawaiian North Shore surfers were not only offended by Australian aggressiveness and racist attitudes, but also threatened

"Rabbit" Bartholomew strutting his stuff in Everlast boxing robes. (Courtesy of Merkel/A-frame Photo)

by the exploitative nature of the surfing world in general. Many haole surfers were introduced to a community of Native Hawaiians who were more intent on preserving their community from foreign encroachment than impressing judges at professional surf contests. Unfortunately, most haole still perceived Native Hawaiians as happy-go-lucky, passive Natives. Amona explained, "Since the Hawaiians were laid back and real low key they [Australians] thought, 'Oh, these guys are nothing. We're going to walk all over them.' Basically that's how the Hawaiians were, low key, lots of aloha. Then they just said they had enough, no more aloha, the aloha ran out. These guys [Australians] ended up getting lickings. Push came to shove, they just pushed, pushed, pushed, and pretty soon the guys just snapped, and they found out, hey, these Hawaiians can get pretty angry if you mess with them."[20]

One of the first violent incidents occurred at Sunset Beach on October 3, 1976. While in the surf lineup at Sunset Point, Rabbit Bartholomew was confronted by a couple of North Shore Hawaiian surfers. According to Bartholomew, he had been warned by surfer "Owl" Chapman (whom Rabbit dismissed as "tripping out"), given the cold shoulder by surfer Ken Bradshaw, and ignored by Barry Kanaiaupuni before three Hawaiian surfers paddled up to him, asked if his name was Rabbit, then punched him. Then they held him under water, brought him back up, and punched him again. Teetering on the edge of consciousness, Rabbit barely managed to get to the shore. As tourists took photos of a bleeding Bartholomew surrounded by a crowd of Hawaiian surfers on the beach, Bartholomew thought of Captain Cook and the melee that had taken his life in Kealakekua. "It was like a ritual of manhood, a full public display of anger. I had no idea of the history and heritage of Hawai'i and how everyone—from the early traders, to the missionaries, to the modern-day real estate developers—had always come and taken from them. But I must have appeared the absolute enemy trying to steal the last vestige of their heritage—surfing. I didn't know any of this at the time—I was just a naïve kid."[21]

After this incident, Rabbit first hid in a nearby bush, then later in a North Shore Kuilima Hotel room (now called Turtle Bay).[22] While in the room, Bartholomew was joined by the captain of the Bronzed Aussies, Ian Cairns, who had also earned a bad reputation. According to Bartholomew and Cairns, they were afraid for their lives, "doing shifts with tennis rackets, standing guard in case they came for us during the night, huddled in this little condominium."[23] One Hui surfer remembered, "Those guys started to be real

uneasy about things, because you know they are in Hawai'i, surrounded by local boys, and let's be honest man . . . you see some of the local braddahs that are walking around, they are not small people. Plus you're in somebody else's homeland. They were starting to feel real small and insignificant."[24]

However, several Hawaiians later said that Australians' fears of Hawaiians attacking them with guns and knives were greatly exaggerated. In a 1977 *Surfer* magazine article, Hawaiian professional surfer Reno Abellira explained, "I knew that under the surface tension, there was a possibility of it going further into more violent acts. But I doubted very much if someone's house was going to get burned, or someone was going to get knifed in the middle of the night. I really doubted that. It was kind of funny . . . really bizarre."[25]

After Bartholomew and Cairns had spent several weeks hiding and surfing only at breaks near the Kuilima Hotel, Eddie Aikau brought Hawaiian and Australian surfers together in one of the hotel's conference rooms to resolve tensions and misunderstandings. Though Eddie confessed to the Australians, "I don't dig what you've done; I'm a proud Hawaiian," he also wanted the conflict to end.[26] Australian surfer Mark Richards remembered the meeting as a great success and claimed that tensions disappeared right afterward.[27]

Hawaiian surfers saw the October 3 incident as less random than the Aussies did. One Hui surfer remembered Hawaiians getting upset over comments made in the media. He said, "We didn't appreciate what they had written and we let 'em know about it. . . . Rabbit was real aggressive; he was acting like a real fool, because of his aggressive nature and competitive nature."[28] But according to some Hawaiians, the final straw was when Bartholomew harassed Hawaiian surfer Barry Kanaiaupuni one day in the water at Sunset Beach. Abellira described the situation in an article and then explained why Hawaiians were so offended by Australians' brash attitudes. "I don't think they fully grasped the situation here; how deeply the Aikaus feel about their surfing. It's a pride trip. I knew some of those guys were going to take Ian and Rabbit the wrong way. . . . It's really a different psyche in Australia. . . . The sportsman/hero type of situation. You're almost expected to be like that. Over here, it's kind of if you've done the job well, you really don't have to go shouting it from one end of the place to the other."[29] Even fellow Bronzed Aussie Mark Warren felt his mates were out of line, telling *Surfer* magazine in 1977, "I kind of felt like they deserved it. . . . He [Ian Cairns] tends to be a little obnoxious . . . but I think it was unfair the way it happened."[30]

According to several Hawaiians, Australian surfers continued to trash-talk Hawaiians in their media after the 1976 surf season. Billy Blankenfeld explained,

> In '78, Fred gave us an article and it was an article that he got from some Australian newspaper. . . . To sum it up real short, Peter Townend said that the Hawaiians had organized a club called the Black Shorts and they were created to intimidate the Australians, or Bronzed Aussies, because that's the only way we knew how to handle them because we were intimidated by their surfing ability. They were better than us so we were going to resort to using guns and knives to threaten them to stay out of the islands and out of the island surfing circuit. And when we read that we were like, that's some profound stuff. Not only was it profound, it wasn't true.[31]

Blankenfeld described his conversation with Townend the following year in Hawai'i. "I let Peter know about it; I told Peter that I felt being a visitor in our home here in Hawai'i, he was mistreating his host by speaking that way. And we let him know about it. I never put a hand on the guy, but I let him know about it."[32]

A few Hawaiians felt that some haole learned to respect Hawaiians as a result of the tensions in 1976. While not all agreed that the problems were solved, many felt it "brought some enlightenment to those who were not from the islands."[33] In a 1977 *Surfer* magazine article, John Witzig historicized events of the previous year on the North Shore and highlighted the accomplishments of many Hawaiian surfers and included more from the Hawaiian view of the 1976 Australian versus Hawaiian story. Four issues later, Rabbit wrote an article that summarized the North Shore events of 1977. In it he complimented Hawaiian surfers such as Dane Kealoha, Michael Ho, Reno Abellira, and Eddie Aikau for their victories and strong performances on the North Shore. Perhaps this was his way of saying, "I can respect the Hawaiians."[34]

Although some problems were resolved, discontent among North Shore Native Hawaiians continued to swell. The 1977 surf season brought with it more surfers, more surfing events, and often renewed frustrations for North Shore Hawaiian locals. By the end of the 1977 surfing season, many Hawaiians realized that disrespectful individual haole were not at the core of their problems. Rather, Hawaiians saw the professional surfing industry itself as an exploitative enterprise that marginalized Hawaiians

and colonized their remote countryside. Thus at this time some Hawaiian North Shore residents created a hui to offset the growing professional surfing industry in Hawai‘i.

Hui O He‘e Nalu Is Formed

Shortly after the Bronzed Aussie incident and the formation of the IPS, local surfers from the north and east sides of O‘ahu met at a friend’s Sunset Beach house to organize themselves. Billy Blankenfeld remembered their first official meeting. “The guys were like, ‘Hey we are going to start a club. We’ll go meet up at Cappy’s house. So it was me, Bryan, Eddie, Imua, Cappy, Terry, Jim Soutar, Derrick Doerner, all the guys we used to surf with. I think Steve Colbert was there. I can’t remember all the names, but we had a bunch of guys. There must have been about thirty guys up there.”[35] The first meeting brought people together for a Hawaiian cause, something Bryan Amona still defines as memorable. “It was pretty low key. We met at a [friend’s] house in the North Shore, we barbecued, we all got together, rallied around and talked about what we want to do in our club. It was a pretty big thing back then, ’cause we weren’t too organized. So for us to get organized, meeting, and being together, with camaraderie, that’s what was really big for us back then.”[36] After enjoying the company, they defined their group objectives. Primary among them was preserving the waves of the North Shore for generations of Native Hawaiians.

Most of these surfers saw the professional surfing industry on the North Shore as the entity that was responsible for taking a cultural space away from them. Terry Ahue explained, “The club was formed to perpetuate our surfing history here in Hawai‘i. At that time the surfing world was moving into Hawai‘i. They were here with all the Australians, and all the foreigners were coming here then. . . . So a whole bunch of the local braddahs said, ‘Hey wait a minute, you know this is our ‘āina [land].’ . . . So we formed a club, to control the surfing world, which was run . . . at that time by Fred Hemmings.”[37] Tom Pohaku Stone said about the formation of the club, “The Hui was formed . . . to resist that corporate control of our space.”[38] So the idea was, according to Blankenfeld, “to start a club . . . so we can have a firm, rooted foothold in our birthright to be surfing here, when we want to be surfing here. And we needed to organize something, put our heads together, and see what good we [could] get out of it.”[39]

Several members of the local community felt threatened and marginalized when the IPS claimed to own legal and exclusive rights to North Shore

beaches during times of competition, due to city and county–issued permits. "They [contest promoters] felt that the permits gave them the right to chase guys out of the water. But permits don't allow that," explained Seth "Moot" Ah Quin. Hawaiian surfer Daryl Stant also said, "Once the contests started coming here and . . . started getting bigger, they started telling people, the local kids, and the local people from here, that on the best days when Pipe is breaking, Sunset is breaking, and Waimea is breaking, that you cannot surf. And they would kick them out, they would run their contests, and they would leave and not give anything back to the community."[40] The IPS was the primary motivation for the Hui O He'e Nalu's development between 1976 and 1978. The exclusive use of North Shore waves by the IPS competitions was particularly upsetting to many Hawaiians. Chuck Waipā Andrus said, "Of course, when you have more and more contests and all the prime venues and the waves are taken, the local people start to get frustrated. At first it's kind of a novelty, but then the novelty wears off. If you come to surf, and you come from Kahalu'u and there's a contest going on, and they say, 'Oh, you cannot surf here because we have a permit,' you know it kind of gets you frustrated." [41]

Some Hui surfers pose at Waimea Bay in the late 1970s. (Courtesy of Mahina Chillingworth)

After the initial Hui meeting at Cappy's house, the club held monthly meetings in a portable classroom at the old community center near Pūpūkea. The Hui was led by an elected body made up of a president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary. There were also club officers and a variety of other leadership roles. Bryan Amona, vice president at the time, said about these meetings, "We'd talk about surf contests . . . who we were going to try and get into the contests, giving back to the community, having beach cleanups." Amona also helped determine the official name of the club.

> I talked to my Aunty Nalani Kalama. She is no longer with us now, but I asked her, what could we name our club? And she said, "Well what are you guys about, what kind of club?" and I said we're just a bunch of surfers, you know, that's what we were. She told me to go research at the Bishop Museum. And the club of wave riders or wave sliders was the He'e Nalu . . . and being in an association is a hui or club. So we named it Hui O He'e Nalu, you know, Club of Wave Sliders.[42]

After further archival research, the club selected an ancient Hawaiian petroglyph of a surfer as its logo. Circled around this image are the words "Hui O He 'e Nalu, North Shore Hawai'i, est. 1976."[43] The club also selected red, yellow, and black as their club colors, traditionally associated with Hawaiian royalty. Although there were a few non–Native Hawaiian members in the Hui, it was strongly defined as "a Native Hawaiian group . . . centered around the efforts of Native Hawaiians and local people, those whose lifestyle is based on the Hawaiian lifestyle."[44]

After the club worked out its formal structure, it became a legal nonprofit organization. The reasoning behind this, they claimed, was that if they created a legal and legitimate organization, the IPS would be more likely to listen to their concerns.[45] As the Hui's membership rapidly grew, more locals found a place to voice concerns about their endangered Native Hawaiian space. While on the 'Iolani Palace grounds at a Hawaiian rally in September 2002, club founder Eddie Rothman relayed these concerns. "A bunch of people got tired of the way that the land and the people were being treated in Hawai'i, from the foreign surfers, so we formed a club, to make it different. All the foreign surfers . . . were just kind of taking over, doing their usual [crap] that everyone else does when they come to Hawai'i. So the place wasn't respected. . . . That's why we're here at this function [today], for the illegal taking of the lands again. They're still doing it."[46]

By the late 1970s more haole surfers poured into the North Shore. Hawaiian and local Hawai'i surfers feared being marginalized from the North Shore waves. In 1977 one local surfer complained that because of the crowds, "I surf Sunset now and then. . . . I never surf Pipe . . . it's too packed. . . . Usually if I drive up the coast, I'll find something in between here and Sunset."[47] Even when competitions were not being held, more and more haole surfers crowded the lineups. During our conversations, Hawaiian surfers waxed nostalgic about the early 1970s, a time when the North Shore surf was populated primarily by Native Hawaiian surfers. Chuck Waipā Andrus explained,

> In the late sixties early seventies, as I remember, the Windward local guys from this side La'ie, Kahalu'u, all these guys controlled a lot of the spots on the North Shore. In particular at Velzyland, where I surfed a lot, there was a group of guys from Castle High School; they lived in Kahalu'u, they lived in Waiāhole, and they lived out here [Hau'ula], and La'ie people. The Mahelonas, the Ho'opi'is, there was the Gents, the Campbells, the Pachecos, all these guys that controlled the spot. So they kind of allowed or disallowed people to come in. They would excuse people from the spot, or they would let them surf there. And that was more or less how I grew up. So I would just sit on the side and if one of them would say, "Hey boy, go boy" [for the wave], I would go [catch the wave]. But these guys were naturally good surfers; they would come out in cut off jeans, but they didn't care what shorts they wore.[48]

Most Hui members came to see the IPS as a corporate, exploitative money machine that did not have the interests of the local people at heart. One club founder said, "Back then, the surfing contests, yep, they were monopolizing on the waves, they were making money. Fred Hemmings had his sponsors, and they were giving him money; he was organizing, he had the pros come in. I mean, he put everything together, you know. And there is nothing wrong with that; Fred has been business-minded his whole life."[49] But Hui members were not merely upset with the IPS making money from the surf meets; it was also that they felt excluded and exploited by business-minded surfing entrepreneurs.

> The bottom line was, the sponsors and Fred Hemmings in particular, were making all the money, and we would just have to just sit on the side and

> we would get nothing; it was just like, "You guys behave yourselves and just sit on the side and let us do our thing," and when they are gone everybody cashes in and they make their money and there's nothing left behind for us. At that time they didn't even think about [it], it was inconceivable in their mind, to even give anything back to the community. They were taking. That's where we were coming from. Okay, if you don't want to give anything back, we are going to ask.[50]

Several Hui members felt that the IPS did not value surfing as a Hawaiian cultural practice and were completely uninterested in preserving the North Shore as a Native Hawaiian space. Terry Ahue said, "Fred Hemmings was a big promoter. And everything [surfing events] was just money for his pocket. That's what he wanted. He didn't care about perpetuating our Hawaiian sport or trying to keep the culture together."[51] In his book, *The Soul of Surfing,* Hemmings took pride in promoting the sport of surfing through professional competitions.[52] As a haole who was raised in Hawai'i, Hemmings held Hawaiian surfing legends like Duke Kahanamoku in high esteem and found meaning in adopting the Hawaiian tradition of wave sliding from legendary surfers in Hawaiian waters. Yet his sentiments toward he'e nalu remained disconnected to Hawaiian Hui members. For him, surfing and the North Shore waves were something to share with the world, rather than preserve for Native Hawaiians. But Hemmings did not see eye to eye with Hui surfers on other things as well—most notably in the way he characterized the club as "thugs" and "terrorists" in the local media (a point I discuss in chapter 7). For example, in a 1987 article he pinpointed "Pops" Aikau as the "frontman" of the Hui and expressed his "disappointment" in Hawaiian "boys" in general and the Aikaus in particular for getting dragged into a club of "crime and corruption."[53]

Although prospective Hui members had to meet specific requirements before they could join, becoming a member of the Hui did not involve money or initiation. You got in through a friend or a sponsor. Blankenfeld further explained, "You had to know somebody in the club, and you were voted in. Like, say, I know you, and I take you to the club and introduce you to the brothers and all the friends of mine and say this is my good friend Isaiah, and he's okay. He surfs, he wants to get involved, and you know I am vouching for him. You know, and everybody says, "Shoots, no problem, you're in," real informal, just like that."[54] The only requirement, other than having a general respect for Native Hawaiians, was "you had to be living on the island for at

least ten years. You didn't have to have dark skin. We had a lot of haole braddahs."[55] As club membership soared in the late 1970s and early 1980s, "Pretty much all the local braddahs wanted to get involved. And as the years went by, everyone wanted to wear a pair of Hui O He'e Nalu shorts, everyone wanted to be recognized as a part of the North Shore club."[56]

Beginning in the late 1970s the Hui was nicknamed "the Black Shorts"—after the black surf shorts they all wore. Designed by Hui founders, the shorts had two stripes down the right side—one bright red, the other bright yellow. Also printed on the shorts was the Hui logo. Ironically, the Australian-based clothing company Quiksilver sponsored the Hui and made hundreds of shorts at no cost from 1979 to 1993, when Da Hui, Inc. began manufacturing them. Although the Hui received over two hundred free pairs of shorts annually from companies like Quiksilver and Da Hui, it had a rule that only club members could wear Hui shorts. Although large Hawaiians on the North Shore often sported the black trunks, they were also popular among local kids who surfed on the North Shore and became part of the Hui as well. As Imbert Soren explained, when kids surfed with Hui shorts, nobody harassed them or tried to catch their waves, even when adult Hui members were not around.[57] The shorts became a mark of hierarchy for Hawaiian surfers on the North Shore in the same way that a yellow and red feathered cape marked the chiefs of old Hawai'i.

In addition to bringing people together ideologically, the Hui was also a social network for Native Hawaiian surfers. Amona explained that everyone pulled together in the group to help each other. For example, if someone needed a surfboard, they could go to shapers in the Hui rather than expensive surf shops.[58] Although this kind of community togetherness usually characterized relationships within the club, cordiality was not the norm at every meeting; sometimes members had differences of opinion. Although voting over issues was the most common way Hui members resolved such differences, on at least one occasion things were sorted out "the old fashioned way." Amona explained,

> I was at one time vice president of the club, when it first started. President was Imua, Imua Pa'aina. That's how they voted. I guess the biggest, the baddest Hawaiians they had back then. . . . Eventually we had a big falling out, a big rumble, a big fight, you know, that's what it came down to, you know [*laughs*]. [*Author: Over who was the president?*] No, you know, just about everything. You know, too much partying, too much liquor, too much stuff

> going on and [a] lot of just petty stuff. And you know pushing come to shove, you know, I had my group from Kailua, and had the group from North Shore, and all these people, and they cleared the tables and let us beef and that was it, we settled our differences and that was that.[59]

Despite that experience, the early meetings usually united North Shore Hawaiian surfers and provided a forum for voicing Native concerns over threatened cultural space. Perhaps more importantly, meetings were a time to plan effective resistance strategies. Again, most engaged in such planning because of the belief that "outsiders were coming in and taking over things that belonged to the Hawaiians . . . like land, territories, even the beaches, even our surf, and our ocean and things like that. People were coming in and doing their own things and we felt like it was against our culture, so we wanted to make a stand."[60] In the process of defining this threatened cultural space, Hui members found an identity that was linked to their pre-colonial Hawaiian past.

He'e Nalu: A Historic Cultural Identity Marker

Hui members united on the North Shore to preserve a Native tradition and identity. For Hawaiians, surfing was, as Rabbit Bartholomew learned later in his North Shore surfing career, a kind of "last vestige of their heritage."[61] As he'e nalu has historically been an integral part of defining Native Hawaiians, it has also been a cultural identity marker for Native surfers. For many Native Hawaiians in the 1970s, the ocean served as a window to their pre-colonial Hawaiian past. In many ways, the ocean has been a sanctuary for Hawaiians, a place where they could free themselves from their colonized condition on land. Thus, as Kealoha Kaio, Jr., explained, the ocean is a place where Hawaiians can "feel relaxed. . . . You know all the problems that are on land? You can forget about them in the ocean. . . . On the land, there are too much problems."[62] But surfing was more than just a sanctuary for many Native Hawaiians; it also connected them to their ancestors.

As ancient legends of Hawaiian surfers were passed from generation to generation (see chapter 1) and confirmed inner feelings of historic connectivity to the waves, surfing conjured feelings of both pride and preservation. In recent years Hui members have still defined themselves, both individually and collectively, as the direct descendants and inheritors of the ancient Hawaiian tradition called he'e nalu.

Many Hui surfers have felt a connection to their ancient Hawaiian past through encounters with Hawaiian waves in the present. During our interview, North Shore surfer and surfboard shaper Chuck Waipā Andrus took great pride in his Hawaiian ancestry and the fact that surfing is a component of that ancestry. "Surfing has been a part of our history for thousands of years," he said, "and when you surf you have that connection, you connect spiritually and physically to all the elements around you; this is a part of you, it's a Hawaiian thing."[63] His connection was based partially on his heritage as a Native Hawaiian and on his upbringing as a waterman in Hawai'i's surf.

> We spent a lot of time in the water, crabbing, sand sliding, fishing and stuff, and as I got a little older I wanted to start surfing. My grandpa had an eight-foot redwood-plank surfboard that he had made, the Olo style. It was just sitting under the house. So I asked my dad if we could go surfing and he took us to Kahana Bay. I think I was either ten, or something, I don't exactly remember, but I remember the first time I caught a wave on that board, it didn't have a fin on it. And I just caught it after the wave broke and the whitewash was just rushing to the beach. But standing up on that and feeling that rush, I was hooked.[64]

Billy Blankenfeld also expressed a sense of pride in his inherited ocean traditions. "I grew up on the ocean. My dad is an ocean person, my dad is a full-on waterman. My dad taught me how to fish, he taught me to skin dive, taught me how to scuba dive, taught me how to lay net, taught me how to go deep sea fishing, taught me how to sail, taught me how to surf, taught me how to swim. Everything you can think of that has to do with the ocean, my dad taught me how to do."[65] For Blankenfeld, his ocean education was more than priceless; it was also tradition. This was particularly true with regards to surfing. He explained, "As a Native Hawaiian, surfing [*pauses*], gosh, has so much meaning to me. For one thing it's a part of my culture; it was created by the Hawaiian culture, you know, my past ancestors. It's absolutely fun. It was something that instinctively I bonded to, immediately."[66]

Likewise, Tom Pohaku Stone expressed great pride in his heritage as a Hawaiian and a surfer. Today, Stone teaches Hawaiian culture classes in the University of Hawai'i's community college system, runs his own nonprofit educational program, and is a leading expert on making kahiko-style surfboards (ancient-style boards made from wood) as well as holua sleds. For Stone, Hawaiian history and he'e nalu are synonymous. He said, "It's our

way of life. It's who we are. We lived to surf. To everybody else today who embraces surfing it's more like a means for them to become wealthy. . . . We were wealthy already because of surfing."[67] While we spoke, it was apparent that when he said, "I get a lot of pride out of who I am as a Native," he meant it.[68] In addition, surfing was somehow a conduit of that pride. This is something that Reno Abellira also saw in the Aikau family. "Theirs is a real intense family structure which may in part reflect how they identify with surfing. . . . They're carrying a banner, sort of. It's like a heavy cultural tie that they've kept intact. They're full-on Hawaiian people, and it's not even something that I can grasp all of the time."[69]

While we sat on the nicely kept lawn of Moot Ah Quin's family house in Lā'ie, Ah Quin's five-year-old daughter hid quietly and playfully behind him. Ah Quin then explained, "Surfing is a passion of mine; it's my passion, I love the water, I love the feeling of riding waves. It doesn't matter if it's a body board, a surfboard, a knee board, or a canoe, just that exhilaration of riding waves. . . . And when it comes to surfing, I can say, I am proud to be Hawaiian."[70] Nearly every Hui surfer interviewed for this study expressed

Tom Pohaku Stone in Hui shorts at 'Ehukai Beach Park, 2008. (Photo by Mark Holladay Lee)

strong and thoughtful feelings about the importance of surfing in their lives as Hawaiians.

As a group, the Hui fostered an identity that was inextricably linked to Hawai'i's past. This is seen not only through declarations like Stone's—that "the Hui is just representing the Native people and their way of life and it just happens to be an aspect of it, and that aspect is surfing"— but also through symbols chosen to represent the club.[71] Describing the selection of club colors, Bryan Amona reiterated, "You know, red and yellow, that's the colors of the ali'i; and the black for the color of our skin, the color of the people, and the color of our ali'i."[72] Such physical symbols, worn regularly by Hui surfers, were again metaphoric reminders of a nostalgic and precolonial past, one in which Hawaiians ruled both in the water and on land.

The Hui's affiliation with a precolonial past not only promoted pride, but also heightened Hawaiian frustrations and fears over losing that space. Throughout the twentieth century surfing remained one of the few prevailing Hawaiian traditions among Native Hawaiians, and for many surfers it became a portal to an ancient and nostalgic Hawaiian world during a time of great turmoil and change in the islands. As he'e nalu took place in an uncontrolled, unowned, and public space (the ocean), many Hawaiians adopted that realm as cultural, pristine, and absent of colonialism. Hence when the IPS claimed rights to North Shore waves, Hui members insisted, "They can't tell us we can't be there, because it's our tradition, our culture; they have no choice, our culture comes first, and our cultural practices."[73] With such convictions, it was easy to rally Hawaiian surfers to protest IPS surf meets on the North Shore.

Protests and Compromise

The Hui protested the IPS contests and their dominance over North Shore surf breaks in the late 1970s. Hawaiian Hui members Bryan Amona, Tom Pohaku Stone, Imbert Soren, and Moot Ah Quin each explained their frustrations toward the IPS's exclusive use of their local surfing beaches. Their most common method of protest was for groups of Hui surfers to paddle into the contest area while the IPS events were going on. Surfing waves in the competition zone made it nearly impossible for the contests to continue. As they did this, tensions between Hui surfers and haole competitors ensued, and fistfights sometimes resulted. Ah Quin explained that the IPS felt "the permits gave them the right to chase guys out of the water. But permits don't

allow that. . . . Technically, you cannot ask them to leave." He continued, "When they started to do that, the braddahs would paddle out. They would paddle out and sit in the lineup. And there is nothing you can do . . . but they are not only going to paddle out and sit down. Brah, they are going to start cracking [punching] guys if you tell [them] to move, you know. And they did."[74]

Honolulu city and county police officers were often called to the scene and occasionally confiscated surfboards from Hui surfers. Bryan Amona said that a police officer once tried to confiscate his surfboard, and he refused. The officer let him go—perhaps because Amona was well built and stood well over six feet tall, or perhaps because he was unequivocally opposed to arresting Hawaiian surfers for surfing in their backyards. Contest and local officials quickly realized that Hui members were willing to stand their ground and go to jail over their North Shore surf. Stone explained, "We took it to another level. Yeah, there were a lot of fights and stuff like that. Basically resistance fights. Some of us went to jail over being in the water when a contest was going on, our boards taken away, and stuff like that."[75] As the police became less interested in jailing Hawaiian surfers, on at least one occasion the IPS hired professional wrestlers as security guards to ward off and intimidate Hui surfers. It just made matters worse, explained Imbert Soren, as confrontations between the wrestlers and Hawaiian protesters devolved into physical fighting.[76] Hui members also retaliated against sponsors and television companies supporting these events. Ah Quin said, "The boys, without giving out any names, threw cameras in the water, kicked guys off the beach. It wasn't a very good time for surfing, for the boys, and for TV. It was a very tense time on the North Shore back then."[77]

Though some Hui protests resulted in minor physical injuries, most Hui members suggested that their resistance was centered on preservation, not intimidation. Billy Blankenfeld made clear that "we were never organized to intimidate anybody. If people are intimidated, oh, well, like I tell a lot of people, we cannot help the way we look. I can tell you this much, if you do get to know us, [you will learn that] we are a lot of good, sweet guys, down-to-earth guys, with good hearts. Real decent, logical-thinking human beings."[78]

The Hui also protested the business of professional surfing on the North Shore, particularly the way North Shore Hawaiians were marginalized in this economy. Many were frustrated by the economic exploitation of the North Shore by IPS sponsors and the television companies in particular. Some members had the same sentiments as Blankenfeld, who felt that "everybody cashes

in and they make their money and there's nothing left behind for us."[79] But Hui surfers also saw an opportunity and partial solution. "With these events came television. There were companies like ABC Wide World of Sports, and NBC Sports. . . . When they came, they came with their full entourage of people, and the politics here was, the boys wanted work. To me, if you look at it, I think it was only fair. If there are companies from the mainland coming here making money off of surfing, they should give the opportunity for work to the local guys."[80]

After vigorous protests by the club members in the late 1970s, both the Hui and the IPS came to a compromise. The Hui worked to limit the annual events held on the North Shore and agreed to let them continue if the IPS hired the Hui as water patrolmen, security, and lifeguards. The IPS agreed to pay anywhere from seven hundred fifty to one thousand dollars a day to the Hui—which often translated to fifty dollars for each Hui worker per day. The club retained this contract for eight years, but in 1987 Hemmings backed out. However, the Hawaiian Water Patrol, founded by longtime North Shore lifeguard and former Hui president Terry Ahue, has since provided water patrol for the professional meets on the North Shore. His patrol is made up predominantly of Hui members. The Hawaiian Water Patrol is also regarded as one of the most skilled water safety crews in the world. It is responsible

Billy Blankenfeld surfing at Pipeline in the late 1970s. (Courtesy of Billy Blankenfeld)

for introducing and perfecting the use of watercraft in life guarding and has trained various water safety teams in its methods.

Although the club provided beach and water security at a negotiated price, the Hui and IPS directors did not always see eye to eye. When Hemmings broke with the Hui in 1987, he explained in a Hawai'i newspaper that Hui members were extortionists. In a more recent book, Hemmings has said that the Hui intimidated their way into the IPS and demanded seven thousand dollars a day for the contests. He states,

> I ended up with an appointment to meet with Black Shorts representatives at the Kuilima hotel to negotiate a lifeguard contract. Randy Rarick conveniently could not make it. I took his aide, Beth Martin. We walked into the lobby of the hotel. One of the representatives of the group we were to negotiate with looked fearsome. It appeared like they hired him from central casting in an attempt to intimidate me. Beth Martin was visibly scared. We sat down. The demand was that I pay $7,000 a day for "security." My mind was a clenched fist of anger. I forced a smile on my face as I walked out. It was apparent what was happening.[81]

Hui members took offense to these accusations.

> In the beginning it was real controversial; Fred went as far as saying we were trying to extort money, and that is not true. Extorting is when you say, "You are going to pay us or else. You are going to have to pay us for protection or you are going to have to keep looking over your shoulder," and that's not what we did. . . . We just told Fred, we want to do the water patrol. We are going to organize. We'll keep everything safe. We'll get involved, get paid for services rendered.[82]

Club members also said they never sought seven thousand dollars a day and were not in it for the money to begin with. In fact, most, like Blankenfeld, suggested that individual Hui surfers did not make money off of the surf meets because it went back into the North Shore community via Hui events. After questioning Hemmings' motives for calling the Hui extortionists ten years after the fact, Jim Soutar explained that out of a thousand dollars from the contests, five hundred was budgeted for the lifeguards, five hundred for the extra community services provided by the Hui. Blankenfeld also explained, "I got personally, myself and all the guys who did the water patrol, we got paid fifty dollars for the day, each guy, that's all, and we stayed in the water, made

sure nobody got hurt, made sure guys stayed out of the water, and you know what, the local people got to be involved."[83]

Events and Evolution

Starting in the late 1970s, the Hui used the money received from the IPS to benefit their community in one form or another. The Hui hosted parties and celebrations of all sorts, and at these events members often handed out gifts and prizes to North Shore community members. Blankenfeld recalled one of their first parties. "I remember our first party we had, it was a club party. . . . It was a huge party . . . all the local surfers were invited. We had it up at Waimea Falls Park."[84] He recalled great food, fun, and a variety of prizes for the local people. "It was a good thing," he said, "because the local people got to be involved." Essentially, "We gave back. Whatever we got we put right back into the community."[85] Some of the most desired prizes were free surfboards. Amona said that since surfboards were so expensive, and local kids could not afford them, the Hui would often sponsor these kids by giving them boards. [86] Hence it was not uncommon for a surfboard or two to be handed out at these Hui events. In addition to parties and other gatherings, the Hui organized regular cleanup projects at various beaches around the island.

The Hui also started competitions of their own. In 1978 they established the Hui O He'e Nalu Annual 4th of July Day Paddleboard Race, in which contestants paddle surfboards from Sunset Beach to Waimea Bay. The Hui also created surfing contests for local surfers. The first was an amateur meet held at Ala Moana Bowls, a surf break off of Magic Island, in 1978. Hui surfers were advised by an experienced contest organizer, Myra Aikau (Eddie Aikau's sister), on how to structure and run the event. Starting in 1986 the Hui founded professional meets on the North Shore as well—for example, they helped establish the Quiksilver In Memory of Eddie Aikau Big Wave Invitational, and they created Da Hui's Backdoor Shootout. The founder of the Backdoor Shootout, Eddie Rothman, boasted that this contest gave out a bigger winning purse than any other professional event, and "it's the only contest in Hawai'i where 60 percent of the people are local people, in a professional contest. They go and buy houses with that money, and this and that."[87]

When Terry Ahue and Imbert Soren were elected president and vice president, respectively, of the Hui in 1986, they added new community events to the club's calendar. Ahue said, "When I took over I made it more like a family-oriented club."[88] For example, the Hui had an annual Easter egg hunt on the

North Shore (in Pūpūkea), and all the children got eggs and candy; the child who found the golden egg also received a surfboard. The club later hosted Halloween and Christmas parties. Since the North Shore was a community of somewhat limited resources, these events were welcomed by local families there. One community member explained, "I bring my family as often as I can to those functions because it's good for the kids, and it's a safe environment."[89] These events appealed to a more family-oriented crowd, and this family emphasis may have been influenced by Ahue's and Soren's upbringing in the family-centered Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.[90]

Hui from 1993 to Present

In 1993 a rift occurred in the club when Da Hui, the clothing company, splintered from the Hui O He'e Nalu. Although a handful of Hui founders became primary shareholders of Da Hui, several club members felt money from the clothing company was distributed unfairly among a few. One Hui founder explained, "I was very, very upset. . . . I thought the club would have a share, all the officers of the club would have a share, and it ended up not being that way. Because of that I kind of faded out. I kind of left."[91] Many other club members became less active after this company was formed. But according to Henry Soren, people who ran the clothing line did not receive large profits from Da Hui, since, as Soren explained, they sponsored amateur and professional local surfers and gave free clothing to Hui members.[92] Nevertheless, club membership and leadership ultimately changed with the creation of Da Hui.

In 1993, after the split, Norman Thompson, a Hawaiian-Samoan surfer from Lā'ie, became president of the Hui. Norm continued with many of Ahue's objectives by maintaining his Hui-run community events on the North Shore. During this time the Hui also held their own surfing competitions on the North Shore. The Hui Expression Session was unlike any other surf meet in that it did not eliminate or rank surfers in numerical order. The object was to give local surfers an opportunity to express their surfing soul in uncrowded, perfect North Shore surf. Essentially, it was about having fun. Whereas on a good day at Sunset Beach up to seventy people might be in the water fighting over waves, during the Hui's Expression Sessions only six to ten surfers were allowed in the water at a time. These sessions were usually opened with a traditional Hawaiian ceremony, like the Hawaiian 'awa ceremony led by Bula Logan at Sunset Beach in 1993. Unfortunately, and to

the chagrin of many, like Tom Pohaku Stone, the Expression Sessions ended almost as soon as they began.

From 1995 till 2003 other Hawaiian presidents led the Hui in new directions. For example, when Moot Ah Quin became president, he continued with community events like beach cleanups and paddleboard races, but he also tried to get the club involved in more political activities. For example, Ah Quin would volunteer Hui services at Native Hawaiian rallies, marches, and demonstrations. In September 2002 Ah Quin stood at the front gate of ʻIolani Palace and allowed hundreds of Native Hawaiian protesters onto the palace grounds. The march around downtown Honolulu commemorated the anniversary of the birth of Hawaiʻi's Queen Liliʻuokalani and protested both the annexation of Hawaiʻi and the treatment of the queen in the late 1890s. At this particular event, the Hui rallied alongside other Hawaiians who chanted songs of colonial resistance. Ah Quin also tried to promote legislation that would allow surfing to be considered a real sport in Hawaiʻi public schools. He said, "We're trying to get involved with scholastic surfing and doing things for our kids, because on the North Shore there isn't anything to keep kids involved with good things."[93] More recently, the club has reached out to communities outside the North Shore. A newer member to the Hui explained, "We try and help out not only on the North Shore, but other parts of the island as well."[94] While most Hui members are proud to be involved in general Hawaiian political activism and activities outside the North Shore area, many, like Daryl Stant, conveyed that the North Shore ocean was still their central focus. "In a way," he explained, "it's good for the club; I mean, now they are getting involved in other stuff, instead of just the ocean. . . . As for me, I just love the ocean. You leave the ocean alone, I'll be all right."[95]

The Hui O Heʻe Nalu was created to preserve North Shore waves for a Hawaiian surfing community. Club members were also protecting an indigenous identity, one based on the historical and cultural practice of heʻe nalu. These surfers actively resisted the influx of haole surfers and the IPS because surfing was a treasured tradition to them; it was Hawaiian. For Hui members, being a surfer and being a Hawaiian are inseparable. Thus the Hui has articulated itself as a Hawaiian group that is entitled not only to surfing their local surfing breaks, but to the Hawaiian tradition of surfing itself.