



2. Building Your Board

During the past 50 years the shape of the surfboard, which began as a crude floating log, has been changed repeatedly. One of the earliest recorded Hawaiian boards weighed about 150 pounds and was hewn from a single piece of wood. In 1957, the Bishop Museum in Honolulu displayed fifteen surfboards covering a century of surfing in Hawaii. One of these collectors' items, probably the oldest surfboard in existence, was a small body-surfing board said to be several hundred years old.

There were two large *koa* wood boards also in this display weighing 148 and 160 pounds each, which were used at Waikiki by a native high chief named Abner Paki. He stood six feet four inches in height and weighed 300 pounds. Chief Paki's 160-pound board, which was sixteen feet long, was believed to have been hewn prior to his birth in 1808.

In early times there were two types of surfboards generally made in Hawaii. The *alaia* (thin) board, made of *koa* or breadfruit wood was considered to be for body-surfing. The *olo* (thick) board, a log-type such as that used by Chief Paki were generally made of lightweight wood. However, his large board described above was made of *koa* which is quite heavy but durable.

The general trend in surfboard construction since 1900 has been toward