

Kathalina Corredor

12 March 2015

Nothing can be proven to this day as to who was the creator of the skateboard. It seems as though several people came up with similar ideas at the same time and the sport was born. The first skateboarders in its history started off riding wooden boxes with roller skate wheels attached at the bottom. The first scene of this reported was seen in France, 1944. Skateboarding was probably born in the mid 40s to early 50s, when California surfers wanted to try and surf the streets as well as something to do when the waves were flat. Skateboarding was originally denoted "sidewalk surfing" and early skaters emulated surfing style and maneuvers, and performed barefoot.

In 1963 skateboarding peaked in popularity. Manufacturing companies such as Jack's, Hobie, and Bing's sprouted up, building skateboards that resembled more like small surfboards than the skateboards we see today. During this time as a new sport, skateboarding was mostly either downhill slalom racing or freestyle. Freestyle in the 1950s was created by surfers who sought an alternative during times when conditions were not conducive to surfing—surfers would imitate their water-based maneuvers on skateboards when ocean conditions were poor. In the 1960s, many freestyle tricks were derived from gymnastics or dancing. This freestyle is different than today's; freestyle continued to evolutionize as a discipline. Slalom skateboarding is a form of downhill racing that first appeared in the 60's and 70's and has made a resurgence in popularity in the 2000s. Slalom racers skate down a course marked usually by cones. The racer tries to get through the course with the fastest time, while knocking down the fewest number of cones. Competitions started being held and the first skateboarding magazine was

published in 1964, *The Quarterly Skateboarder*. The magazine lasted only four issues and resumed as the *Skateboarder* in 1975. In his first editorial, John Severson, who published the magazine, wrote: "Today's skateboarders are founders in this sport—they're pioneers—they are the first. There is no history in Skateboarding—its being made now—by you. The sport is being molded and we believe that doing the right thing now will lead to a bright future for the sport. Already, there are storm clouds on the horizon with opponents of the sport talking about ban and restriction."

In 1966, skateboarding had its first crash in popularity. Multiple sources began claiming that the sport was dangerous, resulting in: smaller interested population, sales dropping significantly, companies folding, magazines stopped publishing, some had to make their own skateboards again from scratch in order to skate using clay wheels. Which was extremely dangerous and difficult to control. In 1972 Frank Nasworthy through his new company, Cadillac Wheels, had started developing urethane skateboard wheels. The improvement in performance sparked the interest in the public and skateboarding was rapidly regaining its popularity. With enough popularity the largest skate competition since the 1960s was held, the Del Mar National Championships. A slalom and freestyle contest hosting up to 500 competitors; this competition was especially important to the sports history because it served as an evolutionary boost to what it is seen as today. A local team, the Zephyr team, ushered in a new era of surfer style skateboarding during the competition; among the 12 members there were skating legends such as Tony Alva, Jay Adams, and Stacy Peralta. The team showed the public what skateboarding could become. From being a potential fad to being something serious and exciting. The team became known as the Z-boys after receiving much fame and has remained as one of the most influential teams in skateboarding history.

March 1976 'Skateboard City' and 'Florida & Carlsbad Skatepark' in California would be the first two skateparks to be opened to the public. They were also the first of 200 that would be built through 1982. In the early 1970s skateparks had not been thought of yet so skaters would go to urban places like The Escondido reservoir in San Diego. Magazines would publish the location and skaters would make up nicknames for each location such as the Tea Bowl, the Fruit Bowl, Bellagio, the Rabbit Hole, Bird Bath, the Egg Bowl, Upland Pool and the Sewer Slide. Some of the development concepts in the terrain of skateparks were actually taken from the Escondido reservoir. In 1978, a few years into the new popularity of the new style, Alan Gelfand, also known as Ollie, invented a maneuver that gave skateboarding another revolutionary jump. He would slam his back foot on the tail of the board and jump, popping himself and the board into the air. That maneuver is known as the Ollie. Most tricks today are based in on performing an Ollie. Gelfand was inducted into the skateboarding hall of fame in 2002. Manufacturers started experimenting with the materials and designs used on skateboards in the late 1970s and that made skaters take advantage of the improvements being made to create new tricks and styles. Many started using the vertical walls of empty swimming pools in California; this started the vert trend. Vert skaters performed more dangerous tricks resulting in higher insurance costs to park owners and many closing down. Skaters began making their own ramps and seeing the urban world as their skate park. Thus, skateboarding lost popularity once more in 80s.

During the 80s the VCR came on the scene, allowing skateboarding to be seen by any kid any where. George Powell and Stacy Peralta gathered young talented skaters and formed the Bones Brigade. Peralta filmed in 1984 the first of a long series of revolutionary skateboarding videos, The Bones Brigade Video Show. To name a few of the legends that

came out of the Bones Brigade are Steve Cabellero, Tony Hawk, Mike McGill, and Kevin Staab. Such videos began influencing clothing, music, and culture.