



# The Lifeguards: A Reminiscence of West Coast Beaches in the 1950s

*Robert C. Baxley*

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Early surfers became accomplished rough water swimmers because, with leashes an invention for the future, they spent a lot of time swimming after their boards. They quickly learned the advantages of using swift rip currents to get out to the break and, when knocked off their boards, of swimming with the breaking surf to quickly get to shore (and retrieve their boards). Most of the early Ocean Beach/Sunset Cliffs surfers went on to become excellent ocean lifeguards because of their developed swimming strength and first hand knowledge of waves and rip currents, gained through their surfing adventures.

### Contents

1. Before I Was a Lifeguard
2. May and Mrs. Miller
3. Malcolm the Mooch
4. Little Mike
5. Charles W, Hardy: Our Captain
6. Maynard
7. Lamar "Pops" Boren
8. Leonard Cooper
9. Big Frank and the Bamboo by the Sea
- Gena Grigg
11. Remembering Dick Ryan
13. Makapuu Mooks
14. Swim in Front of the Green Flag!@
15. Rescues and Recoveries
16. Mouse and the Great White Shark
17. Sunset Cliffs
18. Kids and Rock Crabs
19. Callahan's Date
20. The Birthday Party
21. The Rock Off the Rosarito Beach Hotel
22. The Cortez Bank
23. Coronado Islands
24. Surfing the Tijuana Slues with Killer Whales
25. The Sacramento Reef
26. Webb's and Big Al and Law School
- Conclusion
- Where Are They Now?

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