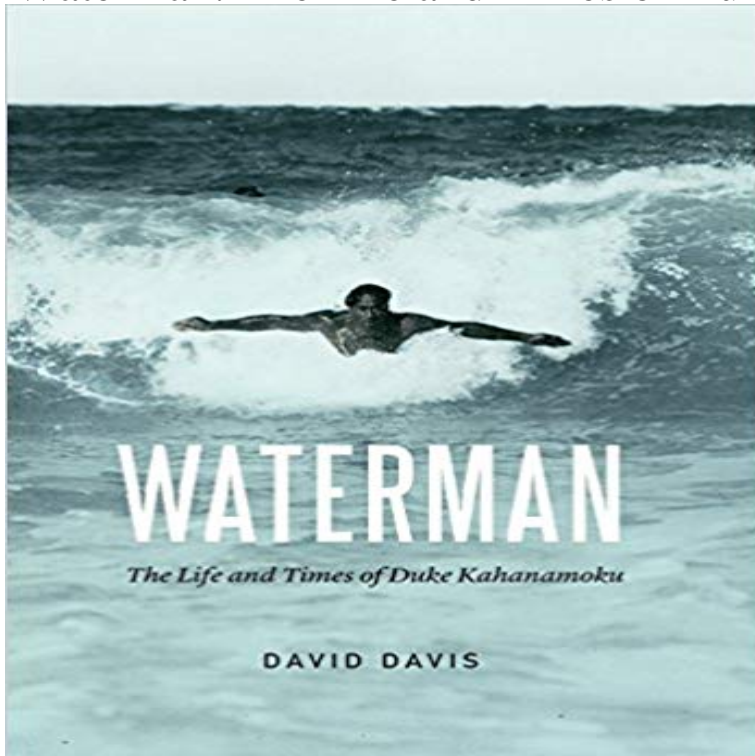


Waterman: The Life and Times of Duke Kahanamoku



Waterman is the first comprehensive biography of Duke Kahanamoku (1890-1968): swimmer, surfer, Olympic gold medalist, Hawaiian icon, waterman. Long before Michael Phelps and Mark Spitz made their splashes in the pool, Kahanamoku emerged from the backwaters of Waikiki to become America's first superstar Olympic swimmer. The original human fish set dozens of world records and topped the world rankings for more than a decade; his rivalry with Johnny Weissmuller transformed competitive swimming from an insignificant sideshow into a headliner event. Kahanamoku used his Olympic renown to introduce the sport of surf-riding, an activity unknown beyond the Hawaiian Islands, to the world. Standing proudly on his traditional wooden longboard, he spread surfing from Australia to the Hollywood crowd in California to New Jersey. No American athlete has influenced two sports as profoundly as Kahanamoku did, and yet he remains an enigmatic and underappreciated figure: a dark-skinned Pacific Islander who encountered and overcame racism and ignorance long before the likes of Joe Louis, Jesse Owens, and Jackie Robinson. Kahanamoku's connection to his homeland was equally important. He was born when Hawaii was an independent kingdom; he served as the sheriff of Honolulu during Pearl Harbor and World War II and as a globetrotting Ambassador of Aloha afterward; he died not long after Hawaii attained statehood. As one sportswriter put it, Duke was Babe Ruth and Jack Dempsey combined down here. In *Waterman*, award-winning journalist David Davis examines the remarkable life of Duke Kahanamoku, in and out of the water.

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