

ACTIVITY: Bathing

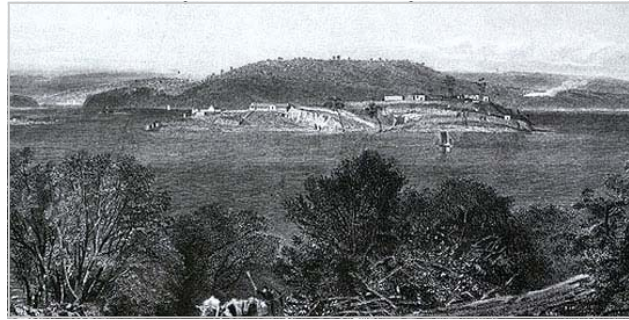
CASE: [GSAF 1841.03.27](#)

DATE: Saturday March 27, 1841

LOCATION: Cockatoo Island, Sydney Harbour, New South Wales, Australia

NAME: Andrew Goggin

DESCRIPTION: He was a prisoner on Cockatoo Island.



Cockatoo Island: 1840

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: New Moon, March 23, 1841. First Quarter, March 30, 1841

ENVIRONMENT: Cockatoo Island is the largest island in Sydney Harbour and is located at the junction of the Parramatta and Lane Cove rivers. In 1839 Cockatoo Island was chosen as the new site of a convict prison by Sir George Gipps, the Governor of the colony of New South Wales. The initial prisoners were transferred to Cockatoo Island from Norfolk Island and were employed constructing rock-cut silos for storing the colony's grain supply.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 12 yards

TIME: 14h00

CAUTION TO BATHERS.—In our last publication, we casually mentioned that one of the prisoners at Cockatoo Island met his death, while bathing, by being bit in the thigh by a shark. An inquest was held on the body at Driver's public house, Three Tuns, on Sunday last, and not at Hyde Park Barracks, as we were informed. We have made enquiry, and find that the port abounds with great numbers of these voracious monsters, which should be a warning to bathers not to trust themselves far from the beach. Accidents are of very seldom occurrence we admit, still we find it our duty to give publicity to the fact, of more sharks being seen this season, than for a series of years previously.

NARRATIVE: “He and some other prisoners had received permission to bathe; he being the first stripped, jumped into the water, which in every part of the harbor of Sydney, and the coast generally, is deep. . . He had not swam more than a few yards before one of the skulking ground sharks had him fast by the upper part of the thigh. One of his comrades in the most gallant manner jumped in and seized hold of him; and after a struggle, in which all the flesh was stripped off, the poor fellow was got on shore; but the great artery of the thigh was severed, and he was already dead. “

INJURY: Fatal. His thigh was bitten, his femoral artery severed, and he either died in the water or an hour later.

SPECIES: Reported to involved a “ground shark”.

SOURCES: The Sydney Herald, Tuesday April 27, 1841, page 2; The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser (April 27, 1841, page 2 and Thursday April 29, 1841, page 2; The Living Age Volume 19 Issue 240 (December 23, 1848), page 548

INQUEST.—An inquest was held on Sunday last, at Hyde Park Barracks, by Captain Innes, Acting Coroner, on the body of a prisoner of the Crown, who, while bathing on Saturday off Cockatoo Island was bit by a shark in the thigh, through the effects of which he died an hour afterwards - a verdict to the same effect was returned by the jury.

INQUEST.—On Sunday last an inquest was held before Captain Innes, in Mr. Richard Driver's "Three Tuns Tavern," on the body of a transported soldier, named Andrew Goggin, attached to the gang on Cockatoo Island, who met his death about two o'clock on the preceding Saturday, while bathing within about twelve yards from the shore, by having the fleshy part of his left thigh completely torn away by a shark, which when it first seized him dragged him under water. He called to one of his mates who was bathing close to the shore, the latter immediately swam to his assistance and got hold of him, but before he could get him ashore the monster again seized him and dragged both of them under water; on again rising to the surface the wounded man was got ashore but died within two minutes after he was on the land. It was also proved that so great was the hemorrhage caused by the wounds that for a considerable distance round the water was deeply tinged with the blood of the deceased. Dr. Stewart, who examined the body of the deceased, certified that all the principal arteries of the left thigh had been completely bitten through, and that the wounds were those of a shark. A verdict in accordance with this testimony was returned.

turned quite pale and sick. It seemed that a boat, anchored some fifty yards or so from ours, had hooked a large shark when we were about one third of our way back to the boat; and the cries were for us to go back on shore, and the boat would come to us. After a struggle, although the hook and line were very strong, he had got off, having bent, or rather straightened the former, while we were still some two hundred yards off.

When in Sydney, I went one Sunday morning to bathe. I was accompanied by a friend who had just arrived from the South Sea Islands. He was very timid, and clung to the rock, never going beyond a few yards from it, and instantly returning. Upon rallying him, he confessed his great dread of sharks. I assured him that in that harbor accidents never occurred from any such cause; which was certainly correct, inasmuch as, up to that period, I had never heard of any person having been killed in it; and in the bays close to the town I should suppose that sharks scarcely ever come, being in that respect very different from the West Indies or the coast of Africa. I took my usual swim out for twenty minutes or so, and returned home. On that same day, as I was walking with another friend, after the morning service, a constable touched him upon the shoulder, and pressed his services as a juryman to serve on an inquest then about being held upon the body of a man *that morning killed by a shark*. We found the poor fellow with a terrible wound, extending from the upper part of the thigh to the knee, the flesh being, in fact, entirely stripped from the bone. He was a convict, who had been confined in Cockatoo Island, a station for prisoners, situated about eight miles from Sydney higher up the harbor, and further from the sea than the spot where I bathed that morning. The circumstances attending the accident were peculiar. He and some other prisoners had received permission to bathe; he being the first stripped, jumped into the water, which in every part of the harbor of Sydney, and the coast generally, is deep, being in that respect very unlike the shelving coasts of this country. He had not swam more than a few yards before one of the skulking ground sharks had him fast by the upper part of the thigh. One of his comrades in the most gallant manner jumped in and seized hold of him; and after a struggle, in which all the flesh was stripped off, the poor fellow was got on shore; but the great artery of the thigh was severed, and he was already dead.

Another case, somewhat similar to the above, took place in a remote part of the coast of Australia some years previous to it. Long will the catastrophe be remembered by sorrowing friends in that part of the world, although many years have passed away since it occurred; for, unlike the last case, the victim was not an outcast from society, a convict loosed from his chains for a few moments, but a young and fair lad, the pride of his fond mother, who had, by a singular fatality, lost her husband and several other members of her

family by drowning, and a friend and school-fellow of the writer of this article. He was riding in the lonely bush in company with one servant, from one cattle station to another, if I remember aright. The road lay for a considerable distance along the banks of what is termed in the map a river; but which is, in fact, an arm of the sea. He was about twelve years of age; and, as would be expected from a lad fresh from school, finding himself on horseback, about to proceed to a spot where he would have plenty of shooting and kangaroo hunting, as well as riding after wild cattle, he was in very high spirits. The day was very hot; and when, at a turn of the road, he found himself on the very verge of the cool blue water, no wonder he felt inclined to bathe. The servant, however, reminded him that they had sixty miles yet to ride, and should lose no time; he resolved, therefore, to bathe his feet only, which were very hot. He dismounted, as did also the man; and pulling off his shoes and stockings, he seated himself on a flat ledge of rock, where the water was very deep, and dipped his feet in. It was much the same as if a person suspended his feet over the side of a boat when in deep water. His head was turned towards the man, with whom he was at the moment speaking, when a small ground shark, about five feet long, rose suddenly, and seizing him by the calf of the leg, dragged him off the rock into the water. The man had seen the fish rise; but so rapidly was the poor lad seized, that ere he could spring forward to grasp him, the shark had already borne him shrieking away. As in the last-mentioned case, the looker-on was brave and true-hearted. He leaped into the water, being a good swimmer fortunately; and, though with some difficulty, succeeded in reaching and taking hold of the boy; for when a shark has a large body in its jaws, it generally rushes to and fro on the surface of the water. For a long time did they struggle, the man endeavoring to reach the shore, and the shark rushing sometimes in that direction, and at others in the opposite. At length, however, they reached a spot some thirty yards or so farther up the shore, and where the water shoaled sufficiently to permit the man to plant his feet for an instant on the ground. The moment this happened, owing to the greater resistance offered, the flesh instantly separated from the bones, and the shark swam off with the piece in his jaws. He got the poor lad, who was half drowned and nearly insensible, safely on shore; and had assistance been at hand, his life might ultimately have been preserved. But the nearest aid was sixty miles off, and the limb was so dreadfully wounded (the whole of the back portion of the leg being either torn off, or separated from the bone,) that, carrying him before him on the saddle, he was obliged to travel very slowly. Worse than this, he had to encamp one, if not two nights, in the woods, before reaching the station. The poor lad died from tetanus, or lock-jaw, a few days after the occurrence.