

ACTIVITY: Swimming, attempting to rescue his dog.

CASE: GSAF 1864.00.00

DATE: 1864

LOCATION: Corio Bay, Port Philip, South Australia.

NAME: Mr. Warren, Jr.

DESCRIPTION: He was "an excellent swimmer".

BACKGROUND

ENVIRONMENT: Corio Bay is one of numerous bays in the southwest corner of Australia's Port Philip, and is the bay which abuts the City of Geelong. Before the initial settlement of Geelong, a sandbar stretched across the bay from Point Lillias to Point Henry and prevented ships from entering the inner harbour. Ships were required to drop anchor in the bay, and cargo was brought into Geelong on small barges. The first channel through the sandbar was started in 1853 but provided less than four metres draught for ships. This channel was straightened out and dredged at a depth of six metres in the 1860s.

NARRATIVE: Mr. Warren was cruising in the bay when his dog fell into the water. He jumped in to rescue the dog, but suddenly disappeared. His body was not recovered.

INJURY: Fatal. Shark involved was suspected but not confirmed.

SOURCE: The Argus, Tuesday November 24, 1868, page 5

"It has been known for some time" says the *Geelong Register* "that an unusually large and ferocious shark frequents Corio Bay, but we were scarcely prepared for such particulars as we received on Saturday afternoon, from Antonio, a Sicilian, and well-known fisherman in Geelong. It appears that on Friday, about three p.m., Antonio, with two other fishermen, were on the bay in a boat almost thirty feet long, which Antonio was steering with an oar, when he observed the shark, an enormous monster, described as over twenty feet long, rushing directly at the boat. The oar, which was being used as a rudder, entered its mouth, which the shark broke like a match, carrying away about five feet of it, and struck the boat so heavily that one half of it was lifted completely out of the water. The men — experienced fishermen — and Antonio, well acquainted with sharks in other parts of the world, acknowledge that they were never struck with such terror before. To use their own words, they felt as white as a piece of paper. Had the boat been of lighter build it must have been overturned, and little chance the three men would have had if once in the natural element of the monster which attacked them. It will be remembered that four years since a young man, Mr. Warren, junior, was cruising in the bay, when his dog fell into the water. Mr. Warner, who was an excellent swimmer, immediately jumped in after it. He, however, suddenly disappeared, and his body was never found. It is the belief of our informant that he was swallowed by a shark, probably the one above referred to, which has been well known to the fishermen from that time. On another occasion the same fishermen who related the above killed a shark six feet long, which they captured in their nets, and, according to custom, threw it into the water, when almost immediately, and whilst it was still close to the boat, the larger shark rushed at and seized the dead fish, almost capsizing the boat in so doing. If the corporation would incur the necessary expense, the fishermen would undertake its capture. There is such a natural antipathy between sailors and sharks that the work would be entered upon *con amore*, and no doubt ultimately a good account would be given of a monster which is rapidly becoming the terror of the bay."