

ACTIVITY: Shipwreck

CASE: **GSAF 1872.02.26**

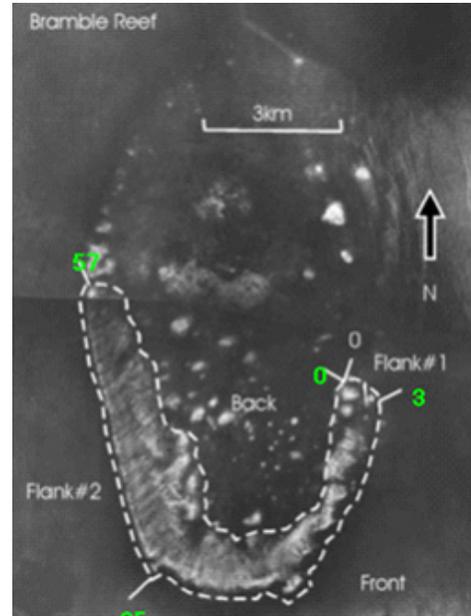
DATE: Monday February 26, 1872

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Coral Sea at Bramble Reef, a large inner shelf reef in the Central Great Barrier Reef, Queensland, Australia.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Full Moon, February 24, 1872

NARRATIVE: The 156-ton wooden brig *Maria*, built in Pembroke, Maine, USA in 1848, operated in the waters of Victoria, Australia in the 1850s under Captain Bain. Under a hastily appointed master, Thomas Stratman, she wrecked on Bramble Reef about thirty miles east of Cardwell, Queensland, on February 26, 1872.



Inspired by tales of treasure, a group of 76 adventurers each contributed £10 to form the New Guinea Prospecting Association and purchased the old vessel named *Maria*. They sailed from Sydney on January 25, 1872, very poorly equipped and with only four of the crew experienced seamen. When outside the Great Barrier Reef, the *Maria* was battered by a succession of gales and went on to the reef. Soon after she struck Bramble reef, the captain and six men launched a boat and set out for help while those on board who had not panicked or become drunk on the spirits she carried, set about building two rafts.

Suddenly, without warning, the *Maria* slid off the reef into deep water. Many drowned **or were taken by sharks**; those who made the boats reached the mainland where some were helped by friendly aborigines, but others in a second raft were murdered.

Four survivors from the captain's boat reached Cardwell and described how they had been attacked by natives and some of their number, including the captain, were killed. The SS *Tinonee* was sent to examine the wreck site and found no one there, but four survivors were located on shore. The vessels *Governor Blackwell*, *Peri* and *Basilisk* were also sent to search for survivors.

Of the 76 who left Sydney, 36 lost their lives, drowned or killed by sharks or aborigines.

SOURCE: <http://oceans1.customer.netspace.net.au/coralsea-wrecks.html>