

**ACTIVITY:** Sea disaster

**CASE:** GSAF 1878.02.13 / SA-182

**DATE:** Wednesday February 13, 1878

**LOCATION:** The accident took place at Albatross Rock near Oliphantos Point, Western Cape Province, South Africa.

**NAME:** Unknown

**DESCRIPTION:** Male

### BACKGROUND

**MOON PHASE:** First Quarter, February 10, 1878

**TIME:** Night

**NARRATIVE:** The Union Steamship Company 982-ton iron screw steamer *Kafir* was considered to be the finest African coaster of her day and was the first Union steamer to call at Delagoa Bay. She was only five years old when, on February 13, 1878, she came to grief. She was bound for Zanzibar with the mail, specie belonging to the Portuguese government, 70 passengers and crew of 76 under the command of Captain Ward, when she struck Albatross Rock during the night. She beached three kilometres south of Olifantsbos Point and broke in two.

Four men drowned including an Arab who had served with Stanley and had been present during his meeting with David Livingstone. A few days later his body was recovered. "The corpse, that of a finely built man was not decomposed." reported the March 15, 1878 edition of the *Times of Natal*.

"A shark, however, or some other voracious fish had torn a great hunch of flesh out of the hip. The Malays who were there, claiming the body as that of a Moslem, buried it near the beach with their customary rites."

**SOURCE:** The Times of Natal, March 15, 1878

**CASE INVESTIGATOR:** Marie Levine

