

ACTIVITY: Bathing

CASE: [GSAF 1883.01.21](#)

DATE: Sunday January 21, 1883

LOCATION: Iron Cove, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.

NAME: John Eaton

DESCRIPTION: He was a 37-year-old male, a resident of Balmain.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Full Moon, January 23, 1883

TIME: Early morning (before 05h30)

INJURY: Fatal

SPECIES: Not identified

SOURCES: The Maitland Mercury, and Hunter River General Advertiser, Tuesday January 23, 1883, page 5 (news item received by telegraph on Monday January 22, 1883 from Sydney.); Grey River Argus, February 2, 1883, Page 2 In column titled Sydney News; Bruce Herald, February 9, 1883, page 6;

A young man named John Eaton, resident in Balmain, whilst bathing in Iron Cove Bay yesterday morning was killed by a shark. Eaton's body was recovered shortly afterwards in a horrible condition; the greater portion of his stomach had been torn away.

At the inquest on the body of John Eaton, which was found in Darling Harbour, near Ironcove Bridge, in a disembowelled condition, a verdict was given that deceased met his death through being bitten by a shark whilst bathing.

*South Australian Register, Tuesday January 23, 1893, page 5
In column titled Sydney News,*

HORRIBLE DEATH.

A MAN DISEMBOWELLED BY A SHARK.

One of the most horrible incidents that have startled Sydney for some years, took place at an early hour on Sunday morning, when a man named John Eaton, who had gone to bathe, as was his usual custom, in Iron Cove, Balmain, was attacked by a shark, and before he could escape had his bowels completely torn out by the sea monster. So far as can be learned, the following are the facts connected with this terrible affair:— It appears that a resident of Balmain, named Thomas Rowe, who lives in Gonlon-street, went to the new bridge at the foot of Western-street, Balmain, about half-past 5 o'clock on Sunday morning for the purpose of fishing. When near the bridge he saw some clothes lying on the bank of the cove, and naturally enough, he looked into the water to see the bather; but he saw no one, and after looking thoroughly around, he became somewhat alarmed, fearing that the unfortunate man might have met his death by drowning. He immediately aroused the caretaker of the bridge, and together they proceeded to make a thorough search of the waters of the bay and the land itself, but for a considerable time their efforts were unrewarded. However, shortly before 10 o'clock they came upon the object of their search. The body was lying in rather shallow water, and was naked. What was their horror on going close to it, to

find that the whole of the stomach and entrails had been torn away, showing that the deceased had been attacked by a shark. They recognised the body as that of a man named John Eaton, a stonemason, 37 years of age. He was a native of Gloucestershire, England, was a single man, and lived in Withcombe-street, Balmain. He was known as an exceedingly industrious and steady man, and was in the habit of bathing every morning in the cove in which he ultimately met his death in so horrible a manner. The police authorities were communicated with, and Constable M'Laughlin removed the body, which presented a horrible appearance, to the dead-house, Circular Quay. It was afterwards examined by Doctor Egan, who at once came to the conclusion that the man's stomach had been torn away while he was alive. There can therefore be little doubt as to the terrible character of the man's death. It was at first thought that he might have been seized with cramp and drowned and afterwards attacked by sharks, but the doctor's evidence does away with this hypothesis.

An inquest was held to-day at the Observer Tavern, Circular Quay, when, after evidence had been given by Thomas Laidlaw, Thomas Rowe, Edward Shingle, and Dr Egan, the jury returned a verdict to the effect that the deceased met his death through having been bitten by a shark whilst bathing in the harbour near Iron Cove Bridge.—'Sydney Mail,' January 27.