

ACTIVITY: Swimming

CASE: GSAF 1883.12.19

DATE: Wednesday December 19, 1883

LOCATION: At Blackwall Point in the Parramatta River, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.

NAME: Cuthbert Vere Lysaght

DESCRIPTION: He was a 21-year-old male.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Third Quarter, December 21, 1883

TIME: 12h00

NARRATIVE: He was swimming with two boys near the galvanized iron works when he suddenly disappeared and blood was seen on the surface of the water. His body was recovered four hour later.

INJURY: Fatal.

SPECIES: Not identified.

SOURCES: The West Australian, Saturday December 22, 1883, page 3; Bay of Plenty Times, January 15, 1994, page 2.

The following will be read as a warning :
—A dreadful death occurred on Wednesday, December 19, in the Parramatta River. On the further end of Five Dock, at a place called Blackwall, galvanised iron works have been erected, the property of a Mr Lysaght, who is at present on his way out from home, the business being managed by his son Cuthbert Vere Lysaght and his younger brother. Cuthbert Lysaght was seen standing undressed on a wharf in connection with the works, and shortly afterwards was seen swimming in the water. An interval elapsed during which none of the workmen appear to have noticed the movements of the young man, but when next they looked at the water a patch of blood colour was seen on the surface, and the swimmer had disappeared. Boats were immediately procured, and the bottom of the river dragged for several hours, but without success. The water police were sent for, and they arrived in the afternoon, with grappling irons and other tackle, and they too searched the shore in the vicinity of the place where the young man had been seen in the water. During the afternoon a body, recognised as that of the unfortunate young Lysaght, was brought to the surface by a party of men in a private boat. On lifting it into the boat it was seen that the right side, from the upper portion of the arm to the hip, had been bitten away by a shark. On the lower part of the back and thighs the marks of the shark's teeth were seen, great pieces of flesh having been torn away. The body was taken ashore to the office of the works, and the coroner was officially informed of the occurrence; but under the circumstances, the cause of death being so evident, it was not thought necessary to hold an inquest. The deceased was aged but 21 years.

SYDNEY, Dec. 21.

A shocking death has occurred, through being attacked by a shark, in the Parramatta river yesterday, the victim being a young gentleman named Cuthbert Vere Lysacght, twenty-one years of age, who had only been about ten months in the colony. The unfortunate young fellow was bathing in the river, at midday, with two boys, at Blackwall point, near the galvanised iron works, and while swimming in the stream he was seen to disappear suddenly. His body was recovered four hours afterwards, and an examination of it showed that, while swimming, he had been seized by a shark. The flesh was stripped off the arm, side, and thigh, and the body was otherwise shockingly mutilated. Dr. Moffat, from the Gladesville Lunatic Asylum, who saw the body, certified as to the cause of death, and consequently the formalities of an inquest were dispensed with. The father of the deceased is now on his way to the colony by the mail steamer *Carthage*.

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