

**ACTIVITY:** Swimming

**CASE:** [GSAF 1900.12.27](#)

**DATE:** Thursday December 27, 1900

**LOCATION:** The incident took place in the harbor at Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.

**NAME:** Thomas Houston

**DESCRIPTION:** Male

#### **BACKGROUND**

**MOON PHASE:** First Quarter, December 29, 1900

**ENVIRONMENT:** Sharks had been driven into the harbor by recent storms and bathers were warned not to go more than six feet from the beach.

**DISTANCE FROM SHORE:** 20 yards.

**TIME:** Afternoon

**NARRATIVE:** Houston and his companions were swimming to some anchored boats when people on the beach heard him scream and sink beneath the surface. A boat which reached the spot saw a shark with the boy in its jaws. When they poked the shark with their oars, it released the boy. His body was then hauled onboard the boat.

**INJURY:** Fatal. The boy's entire abdomen had been removed, almost severing his body in two.

**SPECIES:** Not identified

**SOURCES:** The West Australian, December 28, 1900, page 5; Taranaki Herald, December 28, 1900, page 3; Los Angeles Times, January 26, 1901, page 10

### **SHARK CAPTURES BOY.**

**Thomas Houston Nearly Bit in Two While Swimming in the Harbor of Sydney, Australia**

(BY DIRECT WIRE TO THE TIMES.)

**VANCOUVER, Jan. 25.**—[Exclusive Dispatch.] A school of monster man-eating sharks was recently driven into Sydney Harbor by storms, and boys were warned not to bathe outside of six feet from the beach. This warning was disregarded by Thomas Houston and his companions. They swam out twenty yards to some anchored boats. When close to the boats those on the beach heard young Houston scream and saw him sink from sight. A boat was pushed off, and the spot where he disappeared was reached in an instant's time. Those in the boat saw, just beneath the surface, a huge shark still on his back with the poor boy in its jaws. They poked the shark in the throat with the oars, and the monster let the body of the boy drop. The body was then hauled into the boat, when it was found the shark had bitten away the boy's entire abdomen, and had almost severed his body in two.

United Press Association. — By Electric  
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Received December 27, 10.33 p.m.

SYDNEY, December 27.

A youth named Houston while bathing in the Middle Harbour was seized and killed by a shark in view of his companions. The body, which was horribly mangled, has been recovered.

*Taranaki Herald, December 28, 1900, page 3*

## **ATTACKED BY A SHARK.**

### **SHOCKING FATALITY.**

Sydney, December 27.

A shocking occurrence occurred this afternoon at Folly Point, Middle Harbour. A young man named Thos. Houlston and his companion swam to the opposite shore, for the purpose of securing a boat. They found the boat had disappeared, and thereupon returned to swim back. When out twenty yards from the bank, Houlston, who was swimming behind his companion, called out and disappeared, having been drawn under the water by a shark. Several people on the bank saw what had occurred. They pulled to the spot in a boat, and discovered the remains of Houlston, who had been disembowelled by the monster.

*The West Australian, December 28, 1900, page 5*