

ACTIVITY: Sea disaster

CASE: [GSAF 1910.12.23.R](#)

DATE: Reported December 23, 1910

LOCATION: The incident took place at off Western Australia.

NAMES: Unknown

DESCRIPTION: They were crew of the 200-ton pearling lugger *Hugh Norman*.

NARRATIVE: The lugger sailed from Broome for Fremantle when she encountered a gale and struck a reef. All the crew with the exception of Theodore Anderson and the captain put off in the ship's boat. The boat capsized or was swamped and the men were taken by sharks. The lugger eventually drifted off the reef and the captain attempted to swim to shore, but he was seized by a shark. After six days on the derelict, Anderson swam ashore.

INJURIES: Fatal

SPECIES INVOLVED: Not identified

SOURCES: The Iowa City Citizen, Friday December 23, 1910; Alex MacCormick, page 139, citing The Times (London), December 23, 1910 edition



WRECKED; HAS SIX DAY FIGHT WITH SHARKS

LONE SURVIVOR SEES CAPTAIN
AND CREW MEMBERS
EATEN

SWIMS ASHORE SAFELY

Pearling Lugger Wrecked in Storm
and Theodore Anderson Clings to
Drifting Derelict Six Days Without
Sleep or Food

Victoria, B. C., Dec. 23.—Surrounded by a school of ravenous sharks, which had devoured the captain and all the others of the crew, Theodore Anderson clung to the wreck of the pearling lugger *Hugh Norman* without food or sleep for nearly six days. During this time the derelict was drifting off the west coast of Australia, in waters little frequented by vessels and with rescue practically hopeless.

The *Norman*, a pearling lugger of 200 tons, was sailing down the western Australian coast from Broome to Fremantle when she was caught in a gale and, being in strange waters, struck on a reef. In the face of the terrific wind her condition was thought hopeless and the cutter was launched. All the men, with the exception of the captain and Anderson, boarded the small boat which was swamped within fifteen minutes. As the men went struggling overboard the captain and Anderson could see huge sharks seize them and drag them below.

The captain ordered Anderson to plunge in and right the cutter but the sailor spied three sharks hovering near the boat and refused to leave the wreck. For eight hours the two men stuck to the derelict until she finally drifted off the reef, and then the captain plunged overboard and struck out for the shore discernible in the distance. He was seized by a shark before he had taken twenty strokes.

After that Anderson clung, terrified, to a mast, without moving any more than necessary for six days. At the end of that time hunger and the lack of sleep made him desperate and he plunged over the side and started for shore. He says that several sharks circled about him, but he managed to elude them, and the next thing he remembers he was lying on the beach. He was found by fishermen and taken to Brisbane.