

ACTIVITY: Wading

CASE: GSAF 1919.01.09

DATE: Thursday January 9, 1919

LOCATION: Sirius Cove, Sydney Harbour, New South Wales, Australia. 33°51'S

NAME: Richard Simpson

DESCRIPTION: He was a 12-year-old male.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: It was a cloudy, rainy day and the air temperature was 73°F.

MOON PHASE: First Quarter, January 9, 1919

SEA CONDITIONS: The water temperature was 73°F.

DISTANCE: Close to shore

DEPTH OF WATER: Four feet

TIME: 07h30

NARRATIVE: He had gone a short distance when he was grabbed by a shark and pulled him underwater. The shark released the boy and he surfaced. He was later rescued by a boat.

INJURY: Fatal. There was a wound 12 inches long on the right thigh, exposing the femur and severing the femoral artery, and abrasions on the medial side of the left thigh. He was attended by Dr. Doak but died shortly after he was brought ashore. Dr. Doak describes the wound as having an appearance as if it had been made by a spokeshave.

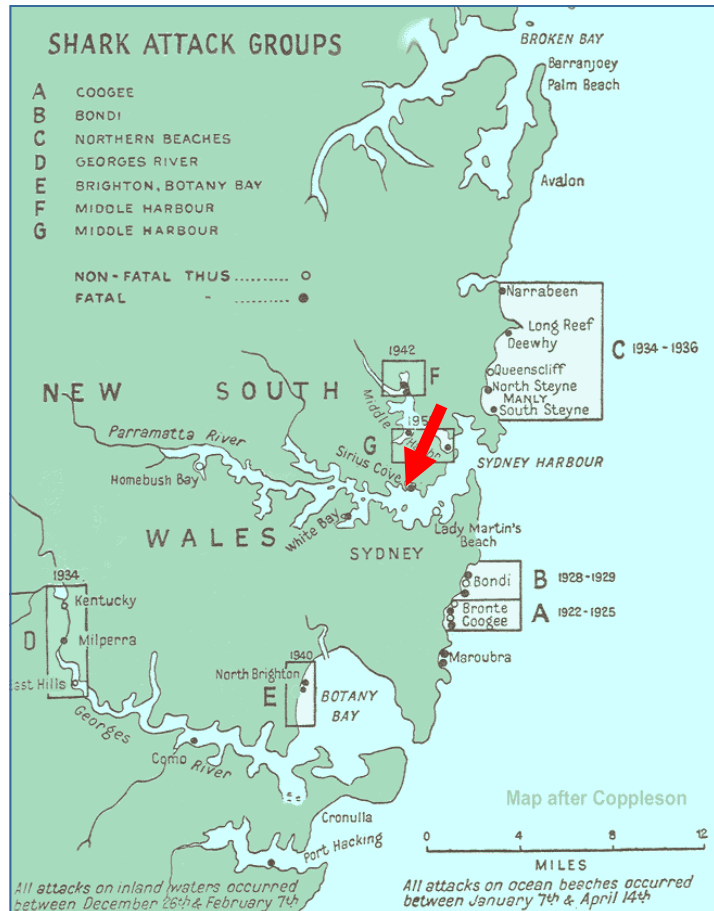
SPECIES INVOLVED: Not identified, but the shark was said to be about 12 feet in length.

SOURCES: The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia), Friday January 10, 1919, page 6; The Argus (Melbourne) Friday January 10, 1919, page 6; The Sydney Morning Herald, Friday January 17, 1919, page 7; Victor M. Coppleson, N1 (1933); Victor M. Coppleson (1958), page 229; Note: Coppleson (1933) originally listed the date of January 10, 1919 for this accident, and revised it in later publications.

NOTE: The Argus (Melbourne) Friday January 10, 1919, page 6.

CASE INVESTIGATORS: Richard Weeks and Terry Peake. Dr. Peake located a headstone in the Gore Hill Cemetary at St. Leonard's inscribed: "1919, Dick Simpson, age 12 years and 10 months, killed by a shark".

© Global Shark Accident File, 1992. All rights reserved. This report may not be abridged or reproduced in any form without written permission of the Global Shark Accident File.



BOY KILLED BY A SHARK

SYDNEY, Thursday.—The death while bathing off Sirius Cove beach, Mosman, today, of Richard Simpson, aged 13 years, serves as another tragic illustration of the danger attendant on bathing in the open waters of Sydney Harbour. The boy had been bathing only for a few minutes in a few feet of water, when he was attacked by a 12ft. shark, which tore such a gaping wound in his right thigh that he died almost immediately.

BOY KILLED BY A SHARK.

SYDNEY. Thursday — The death while bathing off Sirius Cove beach, Mosman, today, of Richard Simpson, aged 13 years, serves as another tragic illustration of the danger attendant on bathing in the open waters of Sydney Harbour. The boy had been bathing only for a few minutes in a few feet of water, when he was attacked by a 12ft. Shark, which tore such a gaping wound in his right thigh that he died almost immediately.

The Argus (Melbourne) Friday January 10, 1919, page 6.

While bathing off Sirius Cove beach, Mosman, recently, says a Sydney paper, Richard Simpson, aged 13 years, who had been bathing only for a few minutes in a few feet of water, was attacked by a 12ft. shark, which tore such a gaping wound in his right thigh that he died almost immediately.

Poverty Bay Herald, January 23, 1919, page 6

MAN-EATING SHARKS.

A BOY'S DREADFUL DEATH.

Sydney, January 9.

While bathing in 2 ft. of water off Sirius Cove, Mosman, this morning, Richard Simpson (13) was attacked by a shark. He was severely injured and died almost immediately. A local fisherman, Mr. T. Holder, who was arranging his net about 20 yards away from the spot where Simpson was swimming, heard gurgling screams from the boy, apparently as he was being drawn under. The shark, which measured about 12 ft., was then splashing and turning where the boy had been swimming, but the lad had disappeared. Mr. Holder rowed to the spot and the shark darted away. The boy rose to the surface almost immediately, and a soldier lifted him into the boat and took him ashore. The shark had bitten the unfortunate lad on the fleshy part of the right leg and inflicted a wound almost a foot long and about six or seven inches wide. The monster's teeth tore the flesh away and laid bare the bone.

MAN-EATING SHARKS A BOY'S DREADFUL DEATH

Sydney, January 9

While bathing in 2 feet of water off Sirius Cove, Mosman, this morning, Richard Simpson (13) was attacked by a shark. He was severely injured and died almost immediately. A local fisherman, Mr. T. Holder, who was arranging his net about 20 yards way from the spot where Simpson was swimming, heard gurgling screams from the boy, apparently as he was being drawn under. The shark, which measured about 12 ft., was then splashing and turning where the boy had been swimming, but the lad had disappeared. Mr. Holder rowed to the spot and the shark darted away. The boy rose to the surface almost immediately, and a soldier lifted him into the boat and took him ashore. The shark had bitten the unfortunate lad on the fleshy part of the right leg and inflicted a wound almost a foot long and about six or seven inches wide. The monster's teeth tore the flesh away and laid bare the bone.

The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia) , Friday January 10, 1919, page 6

SIRIUS COVE FATALITY.

BOY KILLED BY A SHARK.

The tragedy which occurred at Little Sirius Cove, Mosman, on January 9, when Richard Simpson, aged 12 years and 10 months, was killed by a shark, formed the subject of an inquiry by the City Coroner (Mr. H. S. Hawkins) yesterday.

The evidence showed that the boy was bathing in 4ft of water, but was dragged by the shark a distance of from 6 to 10 yards into deep water, and that a similar fatality had occurred at the same spot two or three years ago.

Frederick John Sommerhoff, a broker, living at Sirius Cove, said that at about half past 7 on January 9, he was bathing in Little Sirius Cove. It was low tide, and he hesitated before going in, but as he saw a fisherman hauling his nets he waded out to his boat, and spoke to him. The fisherman told him that two or three years ago a boy was taken by a shark, pointed to almost the spot where deceased was afterwards taken, and told witness that a hole, which had been made by a ship, was there. Witness saw deceased run towards the water. After witness had a dive he left for home. Deceased was in the water when he left. He had gone about 20 yards when he heard a call for help. He looked back, and called to the fisherman, who pulled his boat towards deceased. Witness could see a flash, and a shark's fin, but not the shark itself. The fisherman reached the boy, and pulled him into his boat.

Thomas Holder, a fisherman, of Whaling-road, North Sydney, said that he was pulling his net into his boat when he heard the swirl of a shark. He kept looking about, saw a boy in the water, and heard him call out: "I have been bitten by a shark." Mr. Sommerhoff, who was on the bank, called out: "Hurry to the boy. I cannot swim." Deceased was then in 10ft of water. When the shark attacked him he was in about 4ft of water. There was a deep hole near where deceased was bitten. The boy was swimming out, and the shark must have come out of the hole by deceased's side and bitten him. Witness pulled Simpson into the boat, and he collapsed. "Sirius Cove," said witness, "is always a source of danger. We warn people, but they won't take any notice. I have seen a large shark swimming round the cove day after day."

In reply to the father of deceased, witness said that deceased was dragged from 6 to 10 yards into deep water.

The Coroner found that Simpson died from the effects of injuries received through being bitten by a shark.

SIRIUS COVE FATALITY. BOY KILLED BY A SHARK.

The tragedy which occurred at Little Sirius Cove, Mosman, on January 9, when Richard Simpson, aged 12 years and 10 months, was killed by a shark formed the subject of an inquiry by the City Coroner (Mr. H.S. Hawkins) yesterday.

The evidence showed that the boy was bathing in 4ft of water, but was dragged by the shark a distance of from 6 to 10 yards into deep water, and that a similar fatality had occurred at the same spot two or three years ago

Frederick John Sommerhoff, a broker, living at Sirius Cove, said that at about half past 7 on January 9, he was bathing in Little Sirius Cove. It was low tide, and he hesitated before going in, but as he saw a fisherman hauling his nets he waded out to his boat, and spoke to him. The fisherman told him that two or three years ago a boy was taken by a shark, pointed to almost the spot where deceased was afterwards taken, and told witness that a hole, which had been made by a ship, was there. Witness saw deceased run towards the water. After witness had a dive he left for home. Deceased was in the water when he left. He had gone about 20 yards when he heard a call for help. He looked back and called to the fisherman, who pulled his boat towards deceased. Witness could see a flash and a shark's fin, but not the shark itself. The fisherman reached the boy, and pulled him into his boat.

Thomas Holder, a fisherman of Whaling road, North Sydney, said that he was pulling his net into his boat when he heard the swirl of a shark. He kept looking about saw a boy in the water, and heard him call out ' I have been bitten by a shark. " Mr Sommerhoff, who was on the bank, called out "Hurry to the boy I cannot swim." Deceased was then in 10ft of water. When the shark attacked him he was in about 4ft of water. There was a deep hole near where deceased was bitten. The boy was swimming out and the shark must have come out of the hole by deceased's side and bitten him. Witness pulled Simpson into the boat, and he collapsed. "Sirius Cove," said witness, "is always a source of danger . We warn people, but they won't take any notice. I have seen a large shark swimming round the cove day after day. "

In reply to the father of deceased, witness said that deceased was dragged from 6 to 10 yards into deep water.

The Coroner found that Simpson died from the effects of injuries received through being bitten by a shark.

“Dr Arthur Palmer has kindly supplied me with an epitome of cases of shark bite which have come under his notice on the post mortem table in Sydney. . . .A boy, R.S., aged 13 years, about 7am on January 9, 1919, was swimming in Cirius Cove, Mosman, when he was attacked by a shark. A fisherman hearing his cry for help at once went to the boy’s assistance and pulled him into his boat. He died a few minutes later. Most of the soft parts of the right thigh were missing. There were (p75) abrasions on the inner side of the left thigh. These were supposed to be teeth marks.

SOURCE: Coppleson Archives, 1223/13 Item 1 Miscellaneous/Letters relating to publications