

ACTIVITY: Wading

CASE: GSAF 1921.11.27.a & b

DATE: Sunday November 27, 1921

LOCATION: Gay's Corner on the Bulimba Reach of the Brisbane River, Queensland, Australia.

NAME: Herbert Jack & George Jack

DESCRIPTION: Herbert Jack was a 40-year-old male, a waterside worker from New Farm, and George was his eight-year-old son.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: New Moon, November 29, 1921

ENVIRONMENT: The Brisbane River is still known for its large population of sharks, especially near where Breakfast Creek enters the river. Bull sharks to six feet in length are not uncommon. The sharks are present year round and patrol the city reaches, feeding mostly at night around bridge pylons and similar structures. At the time of this incident there was a whaling station at Moreton Bay.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: Unknown, but the dinghy was moored just 10 yards from the river bank.

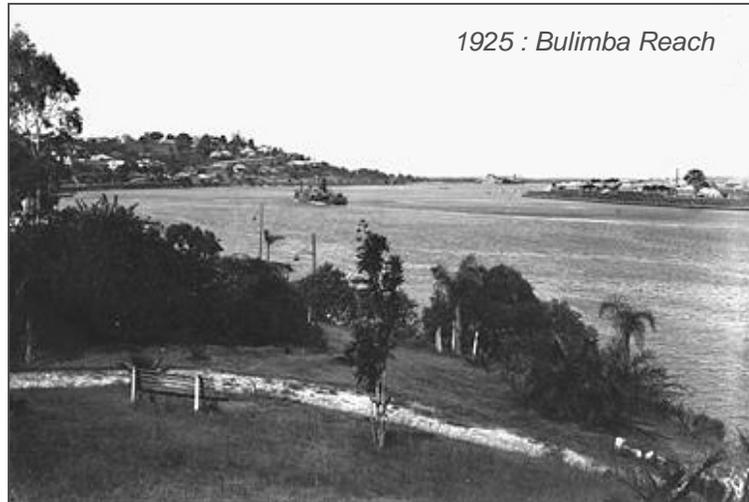
DEPTH OF WATER: One metre

TIME: Morning

NARRATIVE: Herbert Jack and his friend Thompson had decided to take their young sons fishing. Herbert was wading out to a dinghy, carrying his son on his back, when a shark seized his right hip. He kept his balance, gripping his son's legs with his left hand while he struck out at the shark with his right hand. Thompson jumped into the water to help and in the melee, young George either slipped from his father's back or was pulled underwater by the shark. For a split-second the boy surfaced several yards away, then disappeared. A police launch passed moments later and an immediate search was started for the boy.

INJURY: Herbert Jack's right hip, buttock, elbow, arm and wrist were bitten by the shark. "There was a skin wound 12.5 cm [5 inches] long on the right buttock and there was a severely lacerated wound at the back of the right elbow; the nerves were not severed; the radio-ulnar joint was opened. George Jack's body was not recovered.

TREATMENT: Herbert was taken at once to Brisbane General Hospital where he was admitted. On November 28, 1921, the buttock was sutured and the lacerated arm was cleaned, drainage tubes were inserted and the wound was sutured with silkworm gut. His temperature was 39.4°C [102°F] on the following day; it gradually fell, but rose again until December 6, 1921, when a further operation was performed and three drainage tubes were inserted in the region of the elbow. The temperature was normal by December 10, 1921, and the patient was discharged from hospital on February 21, 1922.



SPECIES INVOLVED: Not identified

SOURCES: Morning Bulletin (Rockhampton, Qld.), Monday November 28, 1921, page 9;
The Argus, Monday November 28, 1921, page 10
Victor M. Coppleson.Q3. (1933); Victor M. Coppleson (1958), pages 92 and 237
Alan Sharpe, page 93

SHARK ATTACKS MAN.

BRISBANE, Sunday — A desperate encounter with a shark occurred in the Brisbane River this morning. Herbert Jack, of Newfarm, and son, aged about eight years, who was on his father's back, were wading to a dinghy about 15 yards from the shore, at Bulimba Reach. Just before reaching the dinghy, in three or four feet of water, Jack was seized by the right thigh by a large shark. After a fight Jack beat the shark off, but before he could regain the shore the shark made another attack, seizing Jack by the right arm, which was badly lacerated before he got free, with the assistance of a friend. In the struggle Jack's little son either fell or was pulled off his father's back and was lost. Jack was admitted to the hospital, and to-night was reported to be in a critical condition.

The Argus, Monday November 28, 1921, page 10

A DESPERATE FIGHT

SHARK ATTACKS MAN

LITTLE BOY TAKEN.

BRISBANE, November 27.

A desperate encounter with a man-eating shark, in the Brisbane River this morning was attended with fatal results.

Herbert Jack, of New Farm, who had his son, aged eight years, on his back, was wading out to a dinghy fifteen yards from the shore at the Bulimba Reach. Just before he reached the dinghy Jack was seized by the right thigh by a large shark. He made an heroic fight and eventually succeeded in beating the monster off. Before he could regain the shore, however, the shark made another attack, seizing him by the right arm. Jack's right elbow, forearm, and wrist were badly lacerated before he got free with the assistance of a friend named Thompson, who was waiting on the bank. In the fight, however, Jack's little son either fell or was pulled off his father's back by the shark. A few minutes later the boy's head appeared above the water about five yards further out in the stream, but only for an instant, when it disappeared again before he could be reached. Jack is in hospital. To-night he was reported to be in a critical condition. The attack took place in between 3 ft. and 4 ft. of water.

Morning Bulletin (Rockhampton, Qld.), Monday November 28, 1921, page 9