

ACTIVITY: Swimming
CASE: GSAF 1924.01.19
DATE: Saturday January 19, 1924
LOCATION: Near the Abestos Works, Camellia, Parramatta River, New South Wales, Australia.
 33°49'S, 151°18'E

NAME: Charles Brown
DESCRIPTION: He was a 16-year-old male.

BACKGROUND
WEATHER: It was a hot sunny day and the air temperature was 83°F.
MOON PHASE: Full Moon, January 22, 1924
SEA CONDITIONS: The sea surface temperature was 74°F.
ENVIRONMENT: In 1924, there were only a handful of factories at Camellia and the water was relatively unpolluted.
TIME: 16h00

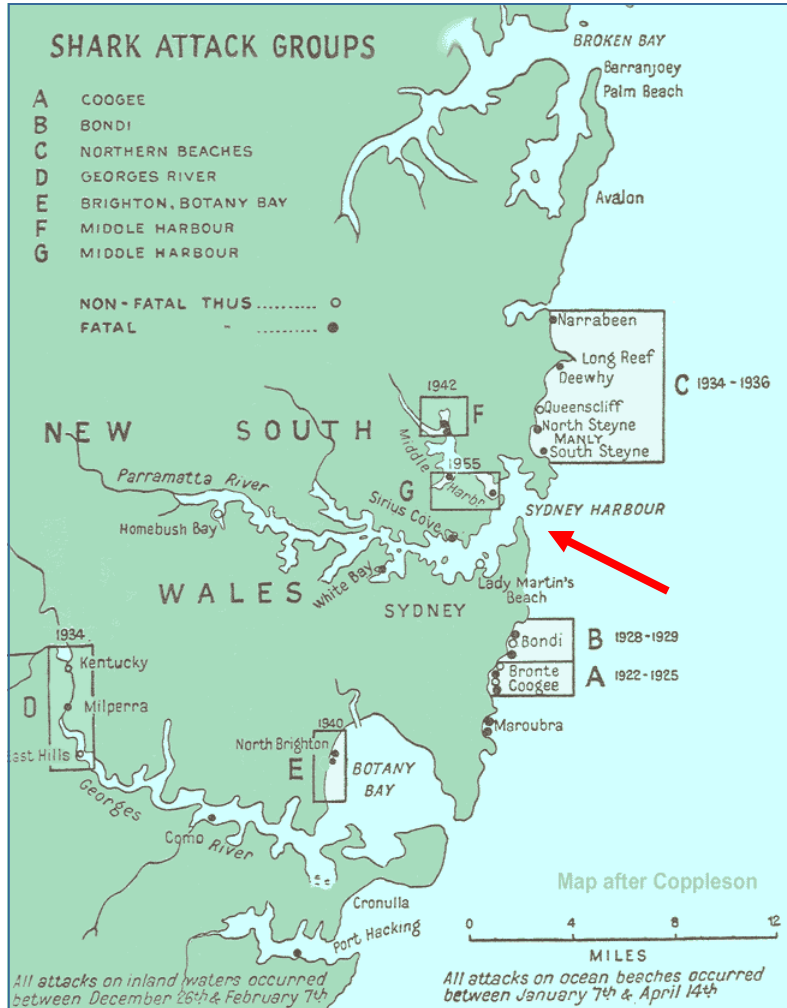
NARRATIVE: Brown and a number of boys went for a swim. He was the first to enter the water. He was only in three feet of water when he cried out for help and was seen to be fighting vigorously to free himself. Another boy, Fred Cox, went to his assistance and dragged him to shore.

INJURY: Fatal. It was reported that the flesh of his right thigh was torn to the bone from hip to knee, and that there was a deep lacerated wound on his left arm. He died within three minutes of the attack.

SPECIES INVOLVED: It was said that the attacker was a grey nurse shark about three metres length. Considering the nature of the injuries, it is more likely that a bull shark was involved in this incident.

SOURCES: The Argus (Melbourne, Victoria), Monday January 21, 1924, page 8; Singleton Argus, January 22, 1924, page 3; Victor M. Coppleson, N2 (1933); Victor M. Coppleson (1958), pages 69 & 230, Coppleson Archives, 1223/11, Item 3; Sharpe, page 88

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Richard D. Weeks, Global Shark Accident File



BOY KILLED BY SHARK

ATTACK IN SHALLOW WATER

For several months past reports have been received from practically all parts of New South Wales coast of the prevalence of sharks, and in places along Sydney Harbour the voracious brutes have often been seen close inshore in very shallow water.

Up to Saturday last no attacks on swimmers had been reported this season, though the alarm has been given a number of times at Bondi, Coogee, and elsewhere where surfers congregate.

On Saturday afternoon, however, a fearful tragedy occurred at Camellia, near the asbestos works, Parramatta River, the victim being a lad of 13 years named Charles Brown, of Western-street, Harris Park.

At 4 p.m. young Brown, with a mate named Walter Cocks, aged 17, went for a swim, and after donning their costumes Cocks declined to enter the river, saying that to him it looked dangerous. Accordingly he went for his swim in an adjacent waterhole, and Brown went into the river.

Cocks was horrified a few minutes later on hearing an agonised scream from the river, followed by a cry of "Oh, help me, help me, Wally." Hurry-

ing to the river bank Cocks saw his mate standing in blood-erimsoned water up to his waist and making frantic efforts to free himself from a shark that had seized him. The unfortunate lad had been attacked on the right thigh and was vainly endeavouring to beat the shark off with his right hand. The brute got the boy's hand in his jaws, and before he could release it it was severely bitten.

Brown's desperate struggles at last caused the shark to release its hold just as Cocks jumped in to his mate's aid. While dragging Brown ashore the sea tiger turned as if to renew the attack, but was not given the chance.

Poor Brown was terribly mangled down the right thigh, the flesh having been completely torn off. He lost so much blood that it is certain he was dead when his comrade brought him to the shore.

The body was removed to Parramatta Morgue by the Auburn ambulance. Cocks suffered severely as the result of his fearful experience.

The shark, which was between 8ft and 10ft long, had, on the previous day, got into some fishermen's nets in the vicinity, causing considerable damage.

On Sunday several baits were set to catch the brute, but although seen cruising about in the same place it did not touch the baits.

Singleton Argus, January 22, 1924

ATTACKED BY SHARK.

BOY'S DESPERATE STRUGGLE.

Bleeds to Death in River.

SYDNEY, Sunday. -- A boy aged 16 years bled to death in the Parramatta River yesterday afternoon after being bitten by a shark, which gripped him while he was standing waist deep in the water. All the flesh was torn from his left side, and his right hand was severely bitten in his unavailing struggle to free himself from the monster.

The victim of the tragedy was Charles Brown, of Western street Harris Park. With Frederick Wallis Cox, aged 17 years, of Alfred street, Granville. Brown went to the Parramatta River, near the asbestos works at Camellia, for a swim. The boys were about to enter the water, when Cox drew back, saying that it looked too dangerous. He went off and dived into a water hole near by. A few minutes later Cox heard a piercing scream, and Brown called out, "Help me, Wally." Cox ran over to the bank, and there saw Brown standing waist deep in the water and struggling in the jaws of a large shark. The monster had a hold on Brown's left side. He endeavoured to punch it away with his right hand, and in doing so the hand was caught in the shark's jaw. Before he could drag it away it was severely bitten. The splashing eventually frightened the shark, which swam away just as Cox went to the assistance of his mate. Cox dragged Brown out of the water, but he had died apparently, shortly after the shark had released him.

When the ambulance men who were summoned were putting the body on a stretcher, the shark appeared again in the vicinity of the spot, and it remained there for a long time afterwards.

SATURDAY'S WEATHER CHART.

Notes on Chart.

Saturday morning's weather chart indicated that a north-westerly gradient existed over this State, a bank of high pressure was lying over the Bight, and there was a depression on the north-west coast. Winds in consequence showed an easterly trend, and although still largely subject to the cooling influences of the Bight, it was expected that they would become warmer over the week-end. Over Eastern Australia two depressions, one monsoonal, and the other of southern type, formed a trough extending across the continent from north to south. Hot northerlies prevailed on its eastern edge, but the southern system was moving quickly eastward, and a prolonged heat wave was not expected in the south-eastern States. Another vast depression was shown off the Queensland coast, and rough weather was forecasted towards New Caledonia, where the centre of the system was located. Sunday's reports showed that the "high" over this State was moving rather slowly. The hot influences of the northern depression were, however, pronounced over coastal areas, and should continue to affect conditions to-day.

