

1934 : Trochus Shell lugger north of Cairns  
John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland



**ACTIVITY:** Free diving for trochus

**CASE:** [GSAF 1934.10.02](#)

**DATE:** Tuesday October 2, 1934

**LOCATION:** The incident took place at Warrior Reefs in the Torres Strait, Australia.

**NAME:** David Younger

**DESCRIPTION:** He was a Torres Strait islander.


### **BACKGROUND**

**MOON PHASE:** Third Quarter, September 30, 1934

**DEPTH:** 18 feet

**NARRATIVE:** He was ascending to the surface when he felt a slight sensation in his left arm. He thought little of it until he looked down and saw the limb was lacerated and bleeding. Another diver who witnessed the incident said the shark followed Younger nearly to the surface before rushing at him.

**INJURY:** Fatal. There were a series of gashes on his left forearm from elbow to wrist. "No structures were missing, but two unhealthy flaps on front of forearm, tendons were exposed."



Two attacks in this area suggest the injuries were caused by the sharks violently striking the victims with their body and fins. In October 1934, David Younger was skin-diving for trochus in 18 feet of water. He was making for the surface when he felt a slight sensation in his left arm. He thought little of it and was amazed when he looked down and saw the limb badly lacerated and bleeding freely. Another boy saw the whole performance. He said the shark followed Younger nearly to the surface before rushing him. Flour with a dirty dressing was used to cover the wound and Younger was taken to the Torres Strait Hospital where he died fourteen days later from gas gangrene.

The second attack occurred in May 1935, when a Torres Strait islander, Andrew, who was holding a reef with one hand, felt something touch the other. As he pulled his hand away he noticed a 6-foot shark cruise by. Later he saw three long gashes on the front and back of his wrist and hand. A similar attack took place near Thursday Island. A diver, David Lahou, was struck by a shark. Later he said the sensation was like being hit hard with a pillow.

## **ABO PATIENTS.**

### **TREATED IN T.I. HOSPITAL.**

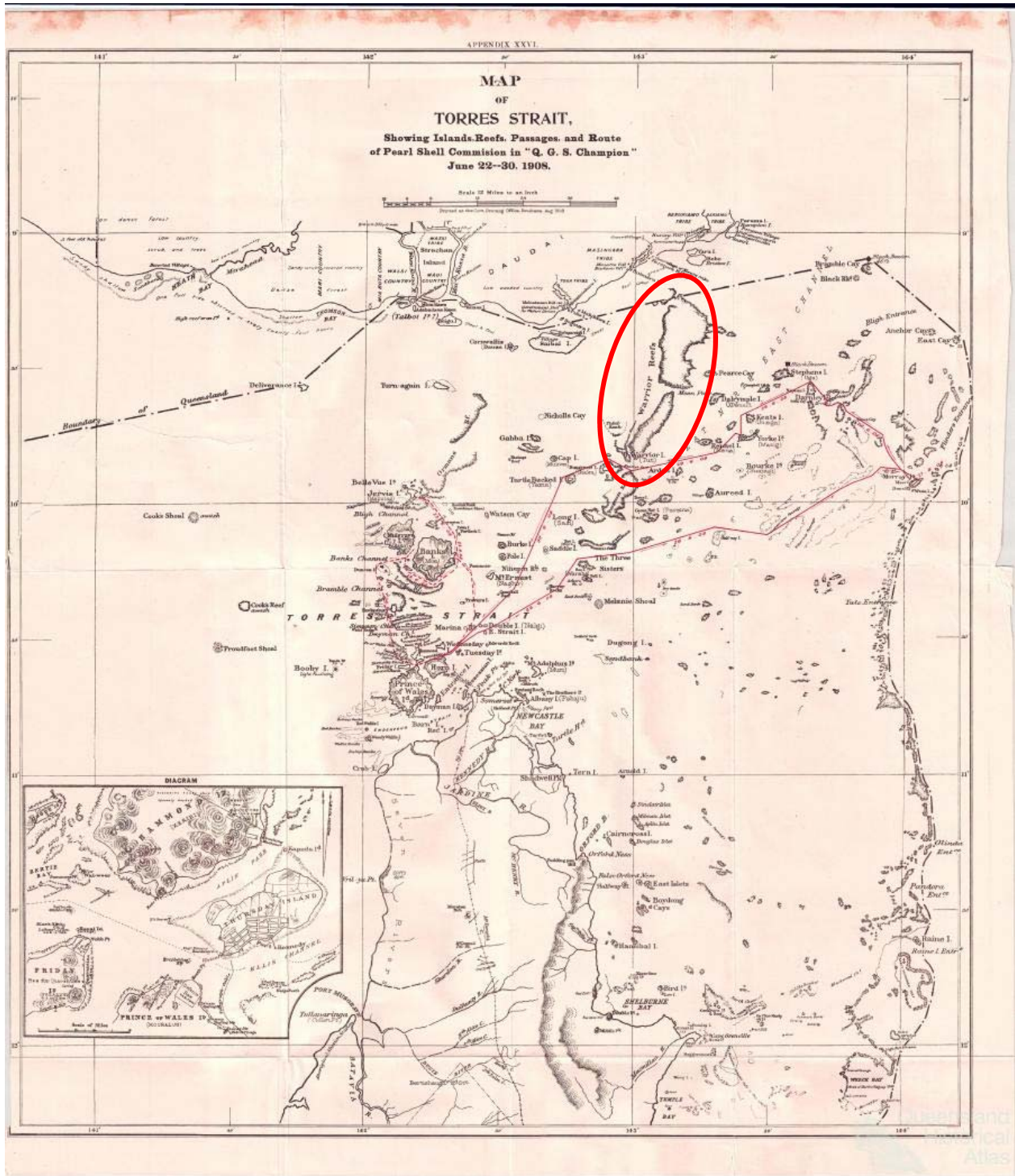
Of the patients admitted to the Torres Strait hospital during 1934, one hundred and seventy-seven were aboriginals. Included in the number are certain islanders and mainlanders employed by private companies, according to the Home Secretary's report.

A further 96 aboriginals were given treatment as out-patients. The bulk of treatment for minor complaints is carried out by teachers on the islands.

An analysis of diseases for which patients were treated in hospital reveals a preponderance of malaria, 39 in all, and the only case of appendicitis in an aboriginal was that of a Badu girl aged 14. She was admitted to hospital with a huge inflammatory mass in her abdomen, and died within 24 hours.

Of two cases admitted with shark-bite one died. As this is the first death in hospital from this cause for over ten years, and as shark risks concern local industry, it is of interest to quote from a tableland statement from November, 1926, to December, 1934, of 14 victims admitted to hospital only one died, but in that period nine attacked by sharks died before being admitted to the hospital.

*Cairns Post, November 15, 1935, page 6*



© Global Shark Accident File, 1993. All rights reserved. This report may not be abridged or reproduced in any form without written permission of the Global Shark Accident File.