

ACTIVITY: Swimming

CASE: GSAF 1936.12.12

DATE: Saturday December 12, 1936

LOCATION: The accident took place at the entrance to Throsby Creek, Newcastle Harbour, New South Wales, Australia.
32°55'S, 151°E

NAME: George Lundberg

DESCRIPTION: He was a 15-year-old male.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: The sky was overcast and the air temperature was 72°F.

MOON PHASE: New Moon, December 14, 1936

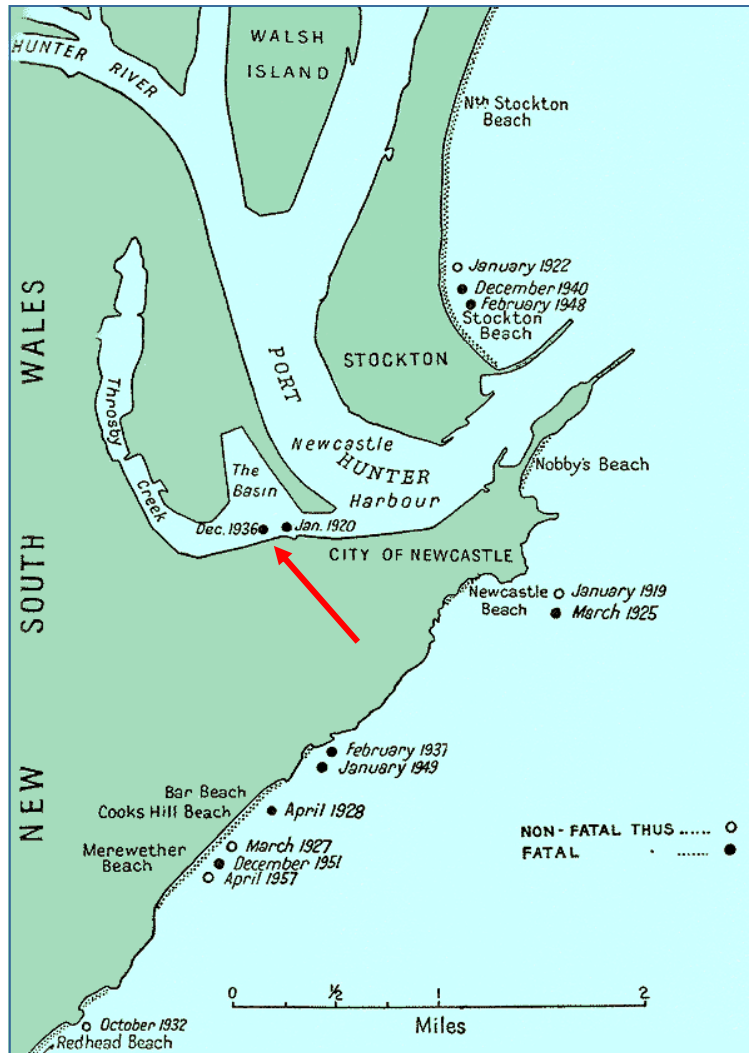
SEA CONDITIONS: The water temperature was 71°F.

ENVIRONMENT: Earlier a large shark was seen entering the harbour two miles away, and several hours earlier a large shark had taken a dog.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: "Close to shore"

DEPTH OF WATER: 15 feet

TIME: 11h30



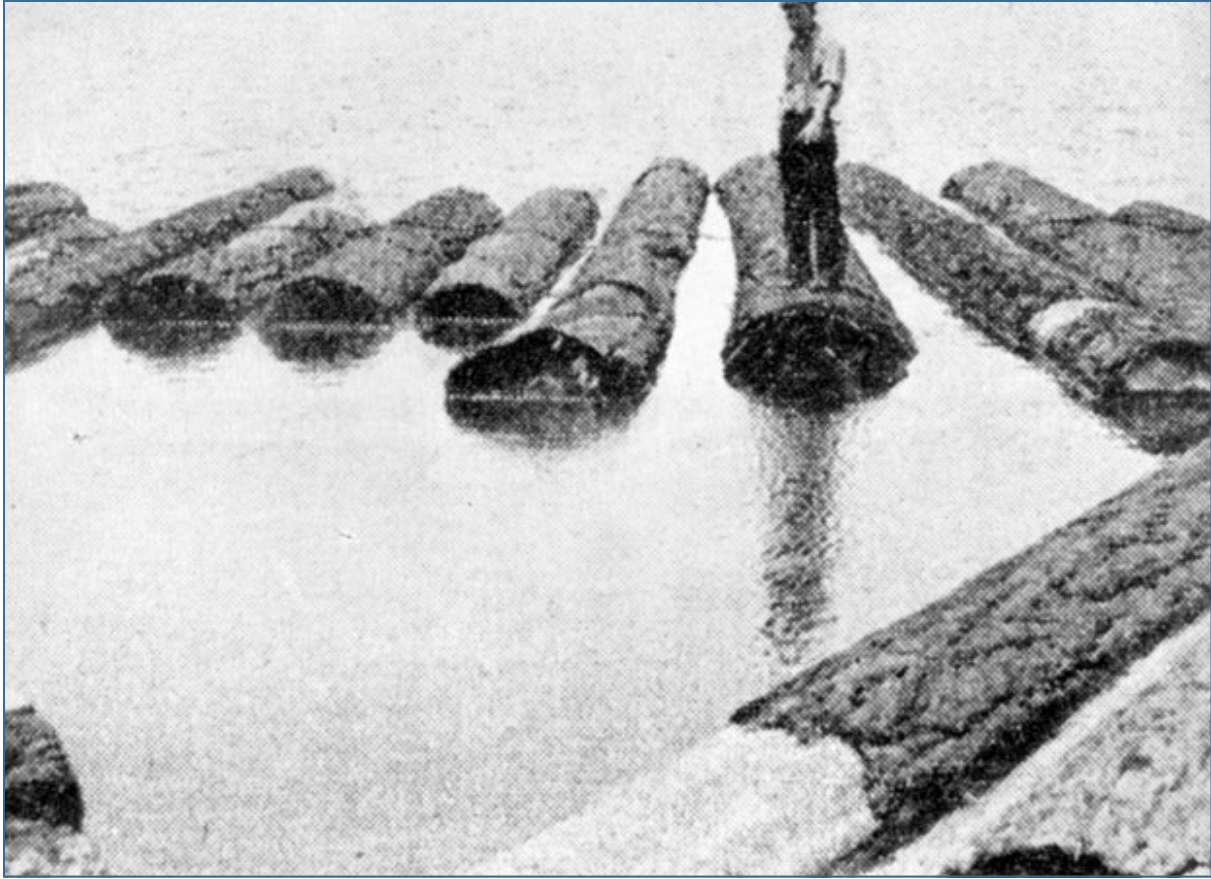
NARRATIVE: He was swimming alone when he was bitten by the shark.

INJURY: Fatal. Leg severed at knee.

FIRST AID / TREATMENT: A tourniquet was applied, but too late. He died soon after admission to Newcastle Hospital.

SPECIES INVOLVED: Not identified. The shark was said to be 12 feet in length.

SOURCES: The Canberra Times, Monday December 14, 1936, page 2; The Sydney Morning Herald, December 14, 1936, pages 6 & 12; Victor M. Coppleson (1958), page 234



The spot where George Lundberg was attacked in Throsby Creek, Newcastle Harbor.

Jim Connors, 15, rescued his companion, George Lundberg, who was fatally mauled by a shark at the entrance to Throsby Creek



SHARK TRAGEDY

YOUTH'S TERRIBLE DEATH

SYDNEY, Saturday.

Attacked by a shark while bathing in Throsby Creek, Newcastle to-day a youth named George Lundberg had his right leg torn off below the knee, and although help was immediately forthcoming he died later in-hospital.

With blood pouring from the shocking wound Lundberg was lifted out of the water by a friend, and on his remaining leg hopped over logs on the beach before he collapsed.

Immediately before the monster struck, Lundberg cried out "Shark," but his friends thought he was joking and it was only when they saw the look of horror and agony on his face that they realised the tragedy.

A temporary string tourniquet was utilised to help stop the flow of blood and the dying boy was given every assistance until the arrival of the ambulance.

Though this is the first tragedy this year, many large sharks have been noticed along the beaches of New South Wales.

SHARK TRAGEDY

IN NEWCASTLE HARBOUR.

Boy Dies from Injuries.

COMPANION'S PLUCKY ACTION.

NEWCASTLE, Sunday.

Attacked by a shark at the entrance to Throsby Creek, Newcastle Harbour, yesterday, George Lundberg, 15, of Arnold-street, Carrington, had his left leg severed at the knee. He died in Newcastle Hospital less than an hour later from shock and haemorrhage.

Lundberg was swimming in an open space of water, amidst a number of large logs, which were floating in the creek, intended for timber mill uses. The shark, a 12-footer—apparently identical with one which had been seen earlier coming up from the harbour entrance two miles away—came up from under the logs, and, after making its one bite at the boy, swam away again.

YOUNG RESCUER'S RESOURCE.

Great pluck was shown by Lundberg. The voice in which he told a companion, James Connors, 15, of Wilson-street, Carrington, that "a shark had him," was so free from panic that Connors, for a moment, was puzzled whether he meant what he was saying.

Connors also showed extraordinary grit and resource. He had Lundberg up on one of the logs before there was a chance of another attack from the shark, did his best to get him ashore, and applied a tourniquet, which subdued the flow of blood from the mutilated leg.

When the shark made its attack, Lundberg was alone in the water. Connors was about to dive in. Another boy, James Sharman, 12, had just hauled himself up on the logs after a swim. A number of other youngsters were on the shore and saw the happening.

GIRL'S WARNING NOT HEARD.

A few moments before Lundberg was mauled, a girl, some distance away from the shore, saw the fin of a shark approaching the logs. She called out a warning, but neither Connors nor Lundberg heard it.

According to residents in the vicinity, the scene of yesterday's tragedy was only 100 yards away from a point where a boy named Miller was killed by a shark about 17 years ago. In recent years dogs have disappeared while swimming a little distance away from the Throsby Creek entrance, and sharks have been blamed. Many children from the suburb of Carrington have nevertheless been in the habit of swimming at the place where Lundberg was attacked.

RESCUER'S EFFORTS.

Connors, still suffering obviously from shock at the fate that had overtaken his closest friend, said to-day that, with Lundberg and another boy (Bill Glen), he had been playing cricket in the street near his own home through the morning, and had then gone off to the waterfront. They had a swim and came out. Lundberg said that he would have another dive from the logs before he went home.

"George dived in," Connors added. "He came up to the surface. I was going to dive in, too, when he said: 'A shark's got me.'"

"He said it just as if he was pretending. I looked at him. There seemed to be a bit of a grin on his face. I said: 'You're joking.' He said: 'No, I'm not.' And just then blood came up on top of the water."

"He was near one of the logs," Connors went on. "I bent down and got my hands under his armpits and pulled him out. As I was doing it I saw the shark's tail flick through the water. George said: 'Will you get me ashore?' I said: 'I'll do my best, George.'"

STRUGGLE TO SHORE.

"I picked him up in my arms and got him some of the way. Then I came to a three-foot jump. I could not jump across the water carrying him. I laid him down on the logs, got to the shore, and got some string from Mr. Cramley, who was working in a boatshed. I went back to George and tied the string round his leg to stop the flow of blood. He was as white as a ghost then. He was mumbling something, but I could not make out what he was saying. I stopped with him till the ambulance men came. Then I was sick, and I had to go home."

Mr. J. Cramley, to whom Connors ran for help, said to-day that he gave the boy instructions how to use the string to stop Lundberg losing further blood, and telephoned for the ambulance. The logs in places were floating well apart from each other, and it was impossible for him to get out where Lundberg was lying.