

Shark attacks

[Environment](#), [Water](#)



On 11 July, 1916 Rensselaer Cartan Jr. saw a looming dark figure and noticed a large fin protruding from the water. A shark, the newest fear of many after the several attacks that occurred just days before. Yet he was 17 miles inland, he knew what he saw and set out to warn the town of the “ sea monster” looming in the creek. “ No way” were the thoughts of many as they heard Caratan Jr. tell his tale, and they continued on with their normal lives, despite his desperate cries of fear and warning.

The attacks of Lester Stilwell and Stanley Fisher show that the technology of this era was very un-advanced, this was also the first recorded shark attack in fresh water, and the amount of time it took for a doctor to reach the place of the attack was lengthy and costly. The technology in this era was very weak in comparison to today’s modern medicine and was not efficient in life or death situations. In this time there was no ambulances and the way to be rushed to the hospital was by train and by automobile.

If these attacks had occurred in modern times, the death of Fisher may have been stopped. The death of Stilwell was definite, due to the fact that the shark mangled Stilwell’s body beneath the water, where he drowned. He also would have died from sheer amounts of blood loss and the fact that no one would have reached the eleven year old boy on time. Though modern technology has changed the amount of help that doctors can provide patients the patient, must be first saved from the cause of death.

In this case the shark did not let young Stilwell have the opportunity of medical treatment that he so desperately needed. These attacks were a shock to the world because they occurred in a creek seventeen miles inland.

Bull sharks have been found in various fresh water sources, sometimes far upriver or upstream in some cases, their high tolerance for fresh water nearly unique among shark species. (Davidson) The bull shark is a shark that is known to be found in modern times to swim into the mouths of rivers to find better prey.

This was unknown to the people of 1916 as was many facts of the entire species of sharks. Nobody thought a shark would travel so far inland and in a creek no larger than 45 feet across. (capuzzo 89) The shark had been allowed to travel so far up due to the fact the the tide was at its highest point due to the lunar cycle. (capuzzo 91) The shark was easily able to maneuver and find its prey in the murky water. The amount of time that it took for a doctor to reach the scene, where Stilwell and Fisher were attacked was far too long.

According to Julius Kish, no doctor lived or worked in the town of Matawan in 1916. This may have contributed to the fact that Fisher died and did not receive medical attention right away as was needed. The only immediate he received was that of his friends, who were in shock. His friends made a makeshift tourniquet using rope to stop the excessive blood flow. (Capuzzo 101) This was not enough to save the mans life, he needed immediate medical attention. Stanley fisher slowly began to die as he waited for the doctors to arrive to treat his wound, a large chunk of flesh missing from his pelvis.

Fisher's wounds were dire, yet he willed to live. " That afternoon in 1916, however, the treatment Stanley Fisher required was two hours and thirty-

nine minutes away. ” (Capuzzo 101) At this time hospitals lay far apart and the travel to a hospital may be too far and by the time patients reach the hospital, death has already set in. When Fisher pulled his body out of the water he lied there in a pool of his own blood. (capuzzo 100) As the blood would continue to flow he was at risk for blood loss and also diseases of having an uncared for open gash.

With such a limited supply of medical attention in this era caused casualties that would be routine in todays modern age. The attacks of 1916 started an epidemic of natural fear against man eating sharks. Lester Stilwell’s body took two days to resurface. In those two days rumors flowed through America on what had happened to the boy. The curiosity on what caused this “ rouge” shark to go on such vicious attacks initiated people to begin researching these mysterious predators. presently we now no much more about sharks and continue to research to better understand how these suspicious animals tick.