

ACTIVITY: Swimming

CASE: GSAF 1916.07.06

DATE: Thursday July 6, 1916

LOCATION: The attack took place in the Atlantic Ocean at Spring Lake (45 miles north of Beach Haven), Monmouth County, New Jersey, USA.

NAME: Charles Bruder

DESCRIPTION: He was a 28-year-old Swiss immigrant, a bellboy at the Essex and Sussex Hotel. He was wearing a standard all-black tank-type suit.



Charles Bruder was buried in Manasquan, New Jersey.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: The heat was oppressive, but there was a light breeze off the ocean.

MOON PHASE: First Quarter, July 8, 1916

SEA CONDITIONS: The sea was relatively warm for early summer and it was 2.5 hours before mean low tide.

ENVIRONMENT: In 1916, Spring Lake was the most opulent of New Jersey's seaside resorts, an exclusive getaway for high society.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 400 feet, well beyond the lifelines and his friends.

TIME: Shortly after 14h15

NARRATIVE: The sweltering heat and the polio epidemic in New York (deaths were running at one per hour) drove thousands to the New Jersey beach resorts. The beach was crowded when Charles Bruder went for a swim on his lunch break off the South End pavilion.

Lifeguards Captain George White and Chris Anderson, heard a blood-curdling scream and saw a "man struggling amidst a swirling circle of red water." White and Anderson immediately launched the lifeboat as the shark made multiple strikes on Bruder. Approaching the man, they found his desperately attempting to keep afloat and heard him shout, "A shark bit me, bit my legs off!" White extended an oar to Bruder and as the injured man unsuccessfully tried to pull himself into the boat, White heaved him over the gunnel. As White hoisted Bruder into the boat he saw that the man's legs were torn off below the knees. Bruder lost consciousness while lying on the bottom of the boat, and although attended immediately on shore by Doctors A. Cornell and William Trout, house physicians at the New Monmouth Hotel, he never regained consciousness and died minutes after reaching shore due to blood loss and shock (irreversible circulatory hemorrhagic shock).

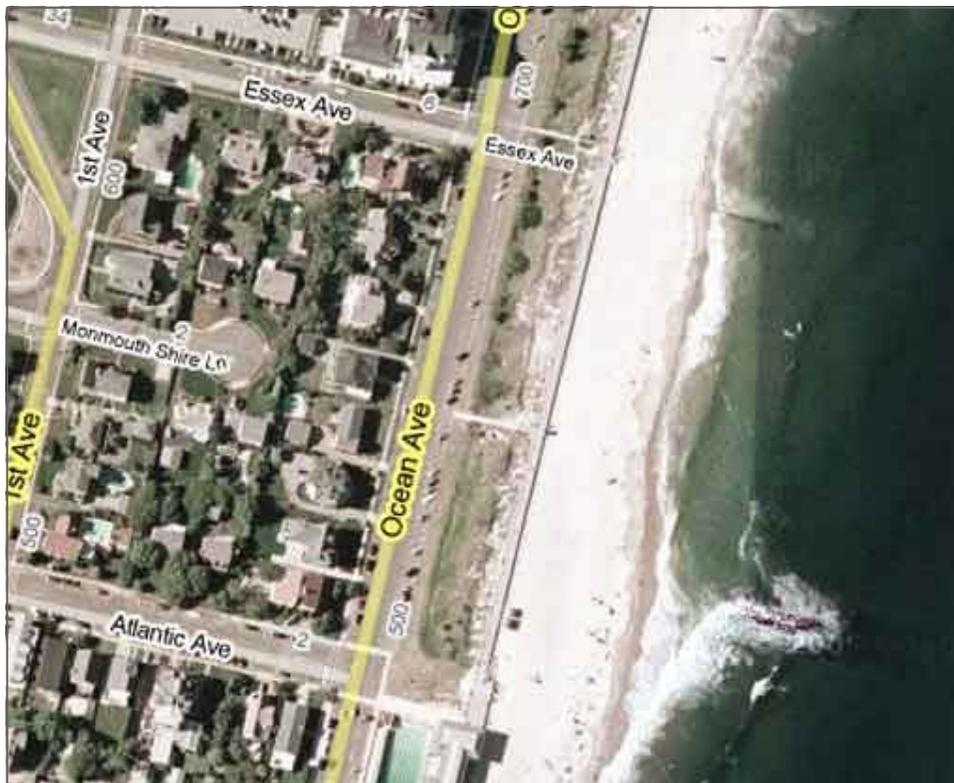
INJURY: Fatal. According to Dr. W. G. Schauffler who examined Bruder 15 minutes after his death, much of the flesh of Bruder's right leg was torn and the lower leg bones (tibia and fibula) were severed halfway between the ankle and the knee. The left foot was also missing, but was severed at a lower point than the right leg and the bones remaining (below the knee) on the left leg were largely denuded of flesh. It was noted that the torn flesh, muscles, fat, and bones were left with jagged ends. There was also a deep gash down to the bone above the left knee and on the right side of the abdomen a 2.5-inch wide piece of flesh was removed.

SPECIES: Not identified, but believed to be a white shark.

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Bruder's body was taken to the hotel after he expired on the beach.



In 1916 the New Monmouth Hotel occupied the entire block on Ocean Avenue between Atlantic and Essex Avenues.

SHARK KILLS BATHER OFF JERSEY BEACH

Bites Off Both Legs of a Youth
Swimming Beyond Spring
Lake Life Lines.

GUARDS FIND HIM DYING

Women Are Panic-Stricken as Mu-
tilated Body of Hotel Employe
Is Brought Ashore.

Special to The New York Times.

SPRING LAKE, N. J., July 6.—Hundreds of men and women and many children were on the beach this afternoon when a swimmer, far out beyond the outer life lines, raised a cry for help. George White and Chris Anderson, life guards, who had been watching the swimmer closely because of his distance from shore, launched a lifeboat and started for him while the crowd on the beach watched in suspense and fear.

As the life guards drew near him the water about the man was suddenly tinged with red and he shrieked loudly. A woman on shore cried that the man in the red canoe had upset, but others realized it was blood that colored the water and women fainted at the sight.

As the life guards reached for the swimmer he cried out that a shark had bitten him and then fainted.

They dragged him into the boat and discovered that his left leg had been bitten off above the knee and the right leg just below the knee. The shark also had nipped his left side, for there were marks of teeth beneath the arm. Women fled when the man was placed on the beach, but the life guards and other men tried to bandage his wounds while a doctor was called. Before one arrived however the man was dead. He was recognized as Charles Bruder, a bell boy in a local hotel, who had the reputation of being a strong swimmer who often went out beyond the life lines.

The news that the man had been killed by a shark spread rapidly through the resort, and many persons were so overcome by the horror of Bruder's death that they had to be assisted to their rooms. Swimmers hurried out of the water and couldn't be induced to return.

So far as the life guards and old residents could recall, Bruder's was the first death due to a shark at this resort. Sharks have been caught occasionally in fish pounds, but none was ever seen near shore before.

A few days ago a boy had one leg bitten off while swimming off Beach Haven, and a movement was started here tonight by Colonel W. G. Schauffler of Governor Fielder's staff to have the waters patrolled in an effort to kill off the big fish.

Colonel Schauffler purposes to organize a squad of motor boatmen to patrol up and down the coast. Experienced shark fishermen will be in command of the boats, and it is hoped that the commotion will drive away such sharks as the fishermen do not catch.

New York Times, July 7, 1916

WM. W. TROUT, M.D.
SPRING LAKE BEACH, N. J.

#110 Atlantic City

RECEIVED DISTRICT COAST GUARD
JUL 17 1916
DISTRICT COAST GUARD

Spring Lake Beach N Jersey 7/10/16

Supt. 5th District Coast Guard.

Asbury Park

Examined and forwarded
JUL 11 1916
District Superintendent

My dear Sir: On Thursday July 6th 1916, between two and three O'clk in the afternoon, we were called to the Beach to attend a Bather said to have been bitten by a shark. On arriving we found a man Charles Bruder by name, about 28 yrs. old in a surf boat on the beach. He was in a state of Collapse & died in a few moments. An examination we found that both legs were missing; bitten or broken off about 4 inches above the ankles a large cut above the left knee the flesh torn off the right leg from just below the knee to where the bone was broken or bitten off, leaving the bones protruding without any flesh. A piece of flesh bitten out of right side below the ribs, also showing tooth marks. We are of the opinion that these injuries were caused by a shark. In our judgment we do not think there is any doubt.

Signed Wm. W. Trout M.D. Res. Phys. Spring Lake Beach N.J.
V.A.H. Cornell M.D. Trenton N.J.

Letter from William W. Trout, M.D. to District Coast Guard reporting the extent of Bruder's injuries. He and Dr. Schauffler examined Bruder on the beach just after the attack. (Courtesy National Archives)

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Signed Wm. W. Trout, MD, Res. Phys.
V.a.H.Cornell MD. Trenton, NJ

FINANCIAL EDITION

Evening Ledger

PHILADELPHIA, FRIDAY, JULY 7, 1916.

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MAN-EATING SHARK OF VARIETY WHICH INFESTS ATLANTIC



This fish, weighing 600 pounds, was caught off the Jersey coast by Godfrey S. Maho, the cigar importer, and a boating party, which was towed two miles before the shark weakened. This is believed to be one of the species now haunting the Jersey coast.

QUICK NEWS

FOSTER RETIRED FROM I. C. S. PRESIDENCY

SCANTON, Pa., July 7.—Thomas J. Foster, founder of International Correspondence Schools, failed of re-election as when the board of directors met for reorganization today. Weston, ex-president of the Scranton Board of Trade and a business man, was made president. He was appointed vice when local banks went to the rescue of the schools, some say Mr. Foster is to continue in the capacity of the schools, but chairman of the directors.

VILLA RECRUITING AGENTS AT WORK NEAR PERU

COLUMBUS, N. M., July 7.—Villa agents are recruiting in large numbers of the American expedition's advanced base, reports brought here today. The marauder's recruiting agents have been working among the Carrancista troops at Villa Ahuac other garrisons, encouraging desertion to the bandit's leader. They used the argument that Carranza is to league with the States.

AQUEDUCT RACING RESULTS

First race, 3-year-olds and up, selling, mile—Eve B. 90, 1 to 1, 20 to 1; B to 1 and 4 to 1, won; Winoah, 100, 2nd; 10 to 1 and 2 to 1, 3rd; Jess, 21, 100, 4 to 1; 10 to 1 and 2 to 1, 1:29 4-5.

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In 1916 New Jersey was in a panic after two men were suspected to have been killed by sharks along their coast. This article warned of an "infestation of sharks". Less than a week later, three more people were bitten by a shark and two of them died of their injuries.