

TWO KILLED BY SHARK.

MAN-EATER APPEARS IN MATAWAN CREEK.

Lester Stilwell Attacked While in Swimming—W. Stanley Fisher Loses His Life in Heroic Attempt to Rescue Boy.

Two persons were killed and a third was badly bitten by a shark in Matawan creek last Wednesday afternoon. The dead are Lester Stilwell, twelve years old, and W. Stanley Fisher, aged 25, who made a heroic attempt to rescue young Stilwell after the latter had been drawn under the surface of the water by the huge fish. Joseph R. Dunn, a ten-year-old New York boy who was visiting at Matawan, was badly bitten in the calf of the leg, but was pulled from the shark's jaws by companions. It is believed he will recover.

The big fish made its attack on Stilwell while he was in swimming with a number of other boys in the creek near Wyckoff's dock. The creek at this point is about thirty feet wide and at high tide the water is probably fifteen feet deep. While the boys were swimming in the water, Stilwell was heard to scream and his companions saw him sink. Some of them rushed to town for help. At first it was thought that Stilwell had been seized with cramps, and the idea that he had been attacked by a shark was scoffed at. Among those who went to the boy's rescue was Mr. Fisher, who was a powerful swimmer. Fisher dove into the pool as soon as he reached the creek and began searching for the boy. Fisher had been in the creek only a few minutes when a commotion was seen in the water and Fisher cried out that a shark had him. He battled with the big fish and finally broke its hold on him and was pulled into a boat. When the man was taken ashore it was seen that he was horribly injured. The flesh on his right leg from the hip to the knee was frightfully torn and lacerated and the thigh bone was laid bare in many places. Fisher was still conscious when taken from the water. He kept asking the physicians who were attending him to give him something to relieve his suffering. He told those present that he had the Stilwell boy in his grasp when the shark attacked him.

Fisher was rushed to the Long Branch hospital, where an attempt was made to save his life by amputating the leg. Fisher was too weak from loss of blood and shock to stand the operation, however, and he died shortly after seven o'clock Thursday night.

Mr. Fisher was a son of Captain Watson H. Fisher, a retired sea captain. Fisher's parents were on a visit in the West at the time of their son's death. They were immediately notified and hurried home.

The torn and mangled body of Stilwell was recovered early Friday morning about 150 feet west of the spot where the boy was drawn beneath the water. It is believed that the body was brought to the surface either by the exploding of dynamite in the creek or by the heavy thunderstorm of Thursday night. The body had been terribly chewed by the shark. A big piece of flesh was torn from the boy's right side and his legs and abdomen were also badly bitten.

The shark which caused the two deaths was seen in Matawan creek by two or three persons. One of them was Captain Thomas V. Cottrell. When Mr. Cottrell saw the giant fish swimming up the creek he got in his motor boat and started out to warn people who were in bathing. Most of them treated the matter as a joke, and others who said they had seen the shark were also laughed at. It was such an unusual thing for a man-eating shark to be seen in an inland creek that no one would believe it possible.

After Stilwell and Fisher had been attacked some boys who had not heard of the occurrence went in swimming in another part of the creek and it was at this point that the Dunn boy was bitten. He was just leaving the water when the shark grabbed him by the leg. He screamed and his companions caught hold of his hands and pulled him away from the shark. Most of the calf of one leg was torn away. Dunn was hurried to the hospital at New Brunswick for treatment.

As soon as the news of the attack on the Stilwell boy and Fisher spread through the village, old watermen hurried to the mouth of the creek with heavy wire fencing, which was stretched back and forth across the creek to prevent the shark from getting out. Men armed with rifles and harpoons got into motor boats and patrolled the creek in search of the big fish. At night several charges of dynamite were exploded along the creek in hopes that the concussion would stun the shark so that it could be captured.

Old time fishermen are puzzled over the appearance of man-eating sharks in the waters around here. Many theories are advanced as to the reason for the appearance of the sharks. A theory which is held by many old sea-faring men is that the food supply of the sharks has been lessened because of the few trans-Atlantic passenger ships which are now running. It is the habit of the sharks to follow these ships and eat the refuse which is thrown overboard.

The appearance of the sharks here is a heavy blow to the bathing house proprietors along the shore. In many places heavy wire barriers have been placed around the bathing grounds and armed men patrol the grounds in motor boats during the hours of bathing. In spite of all these precautions many people who would otherwise enjoy bathing refuse to go into the water.