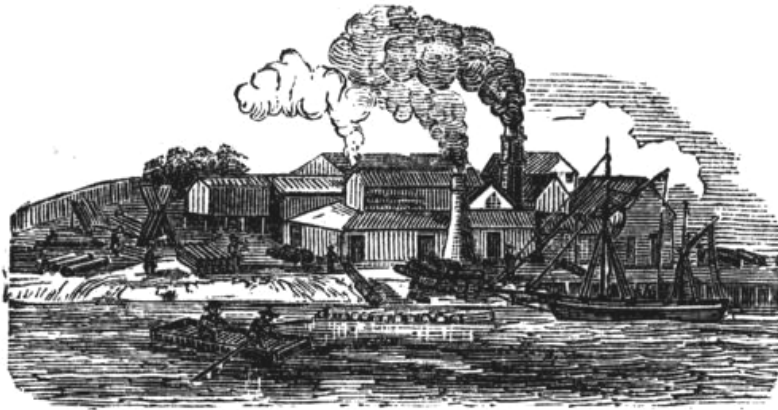


DOGS & CATFISH

As the population of Brisbane grew rapidly in the 1860s, and more people used the river for bathing or recreation, the potential for shark attacks increased. Newspaper articles continued to carry dire warnings about the sharks, which were ignored as usual, especially by the youth of the town. Despite this, attacks on humans were relatively rare during the 1860s and '70s, and for the next few decades it was mostly the dogs of Brisbane who were the victims in any reported incidents:

CAPTURE OF A SHARK. - On Saturday last the workmen employed at Mr. Pettigrew's saw-mills, captured a shark, which measured five feet in length, with proportionate bulk. The fish was seen in the river, and a line was cast with a strong hook and enticing bait, which the shark devoured greedily. Thus was he captured, but not until he had displayed great strength and ferocity in his endeavors to escape.

(Moreton Bay Courier, 7 February 1860)



Pettigrew Saw Mills, William Street, 1861 (JOL #64896)

1861

SHARKS! –

A common practice has prevailed among the youth of this town, more especially in summer, of bathing in the river, and it is a matter of marvel, that injury to life and limb has not frequently occurred by swimmers coming into contact with the numerous sharks known to infest the river. Several accidents of the kind happened years ago, and we draw attention to the subject particularly just now, because the summer is fast coming on - we have no bathing house open to the general public - and lads might be tempted to indulge in a "bogy" by the inviting appearance of the river on warm days. Yesterday afternoon a shark attempted to seize a dog while swimming across the Kangaroo Point ferry, and wounded the poor animal so much as to render the sowing up of the part necessary, and it would probably have been carried away bodily at the next attempt had not the ferry boat been near at the time and a noise made with the oars in the water to frighten the monster away. This incident shows that sharks are now to be found in the river, and venturesome people had better avoid tempting providence and making bait of themselves. It also serves to call attention to the pressing necessity which exists for public baths.

(The Courier, 27 November 1861, p2)

1863

Sometimes the shark's position as apex predator in the river could be usurped, as witnessed in 1863 by William Turrell, chief officer on the *Sunda*:

On the evening of Thursday the 29th instant, my attention was attracted by a large fish playing with some pieces of wood that were floating about in the wake of our ship, and being anxious to ascertain its nature I caused a baited shark-hook to be dropped over the stern, which it immediately