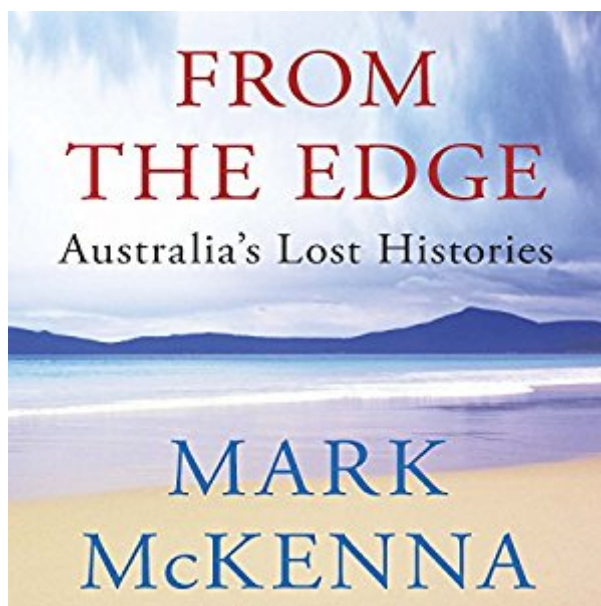


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# From The Edge: Australia's Lost Histories



## Synopsis

In March 1797, five British sailors and 12 Bengali seamen struggled ashore after their longboat broke apart in a storm. Their fellow-survivors from the wreck of the Sydney Cove were stranded more than 500 kilometres southeast in Bass Strait. To rescue their mates and to save themselves the 19 men must walk 700 kilometres north to Sydney. That remarkable walk is a story of endurance but also of unexpected Aboriginal help. From the Edge: Australia's Lost Histories recounts four such extraordinary and largely forgotten stories: the walk of shipwreck survivors; the founding of a 'new Singapore' in western Arnhem Land in the 1840s; Australia's largest industrial development project nestled amongst outstanding Indigenous rock art in the Pilbara; and the ever-changing story of James Cook's time in Cooktown in 1770. This new telling of the central drama of Australian history; the encounter between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians, may hold the key to understanding this land and its people.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A balanced view of some of the history relating to coastal settlement of regions around Australia. Having lived in the Karratha/Dampier region in the early 1980's I found this section of special interest. The rock painting was still around the King Bay area and Woodside were well into the construction of the first Liquid Natural Gas train. The real history of the region was not that well known or published at the time. I recommend reading this book.

Could not put it down! heard the author being interviewed on local radio, and knew it would be a

fantastic read! First taught Australian history at a Catholic school in 1955, by a fantastic nun, we learnt about many of the things related by Mark in his book, she never taught us we did not do terrible things to each other did not dress it up. If only we could all learn. Please make it available for educational sources. Every Australian would benefit from reading this book.

In the late eighteenth century, seventeen men set off to walk some 700 kilometres from Ninety Mile Beach (in Victoria) to Sydney. Leaving their fellow survivors, they had set off in a long boat after the shipwreck of the *Sydney Cove* off Preservation Island in Bass Strait. When their longboat broke apart in a storm, they had no alternative to walk north following the coastline. This story, of their walk, is also an amazing story of the support they received from the Indigenous people they encountered along the way. There are three other stories in this book: the founding of a new Singapore in western Arnhem Land in the 1840s; the constantly evolving story of Captain James Cook's time in Cooktown in 1770; and the story of Australia's largest industrial development project amongst outstanding Indigenous rock art in the Pilbara. Each of these four stories involves different encounters between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Each requires me, as a non-Indigenous Australian, to think about the history I have learned and the possible interpretations of events. Before reading this book, I knew very little about these four different stories. I had not heard of the walk from Ninety Mile Beach in 1797, or of the settlement in West Arnhem Land. I had never really thought about Captain Cook's time in (and impact on) what we now call Cooktown in 1770. Until recently, I had not thought of the impact of the development of the Pilbara on those who had occupied this ancient land long before European arrival. I've enjoyed reading this book. While I've learned more of the history around European arrival, I've also had to think (uncomfortably at times) about the impact on those who were here long before us: The Indigenous people and their culture. I understand that *From the Edge* is the first of two books intended to explore Australian history through place. I look forward to reading the second of these books when it becomes available. Note: My thanks to NetGalley and Melbourne University Publishing for providing me with a free electronic copy of this book for review purposes. Jennifer Cameron-Smith

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