

3-13-2020

Port Douglas, Emerald Creek Falls, and Tropical Cyclones

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Recommended Citation

Swafford, Christina E., "Port Douglas, Emerald Creek Falls, and Tropical Cyclones" (2020). *2019-20 Postcards*. Article. Submission 4.
https://digitalcommons.linfield.edu/intl_postcards_1920/4

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Christina Swafford
Spring 2020 Cairns, Australia
March 13, 2020

Port Douglas, Emerald Creek Falls, and Tropical Cyclones



G'day from Australia!

The 12th of March marks one month since I first arrived in Australia, and it has been a wild ride! Since my last update, I have attended more classes, visited a coastal town, and participated in a group hike to a waterfall!

Classes are in full swing here at James Cook University. Monday of this week marked the beginning of week three, and I have already learned so much! In my Myth, Ritual, and Religion class, we are learning about flood myths from areas such as Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Northwest of the United States. We are also expected to discuss the topics and participate in group activities that will supplement our learning. My Indigenous Australians class discussed Indigenous astronomy this week, which was an incredibly fascinating topic. Yesterday, we learned about an Indigenous rock formation which was designed to calculate the placement of the sun during the equinox and solstices. In fact, this creation was formed before Stonehenge, which

makes it a fascinating anthropological and scientific discovery. Finally, my Forensic Archaeology class is discussing bones and burials this week, and next week we are talking about assessing trauma on bones!

In the last week of February, my apartment complex (Cairns Student Lodge) hosted a trip to Port Douglas, a coastal town north of Cairns. Port Douglas is known for its fantastic markets, which we had the privilege of visiting! At the markets, tourists and locals can purchase food, Indigenous artwork, jewelry, animal products, and much more. I purchased some beautiful Indigenous boomerangs and platters for my family back home, and I also found some stunning Aussie jewelry. After the markets, we were planning on going to the beach, but the stingers (deadly jellyfish) were at a high, so we went to a swimming hole instead! We had an amazing swim in the cool river water, and then we drove back to our apartments.

Last weekend, Cairns Student Lodge went to the Kuranda markets, and on a hike to a waterfall. It was slightly rainy, but what else can you expect when you live in a rainforest! Once we arrived at the markets, we had some time to walk around and purchase goods. The markets were comparable to the Port Douglas markets, but the Kuranda ones are open every day. I had some yummy lemon gelato, and we went on our way to the Emerald Creek waterfall. Access to the waterfall requires some (slippery) hiking, but it was entirely worth it for the stunning view and experience. The water was cool, and we could see an incredible view of the rainforest while sunbathing on the rocks.

While the weather in February was bright and sunny, March has been the exact opposite. Back at home, people say the Oregon weather is unpredictable—but it is nothing compared to the weather here! I can count on both hands the amount of times that I have left in the morning to sunny, hot weather, and when I walk back it is uncontrollably pouring rain. Word of advice to travelers—bring your raincoat/umbrella because these tropical cyclones are no joke!

Cheers!

Christina