Travelling North: The Diary of Caroline Creaghe

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Abstract

In 1883 Caroline Creaghe participated in a four-person expedition from Normanton in North Queensland to Darwin in South Australia’s Northern Territory as its sole female member. By some reckonings this makes her Australia’s first female explorer. As she journeyed she kept a diary recording her impressions of the landscape, of the people she encountered along the way and of her relations with the other members of the expedition. Extracts from the diary, which is held in the Mitchell Library in Sydney, have in the past been anthologized, but in 2004 the diary has been published in full for the first time, thus making it available to a much broader reading public. The paper discusses the process and the pitfalls of converting an original diary into a book publication. It also assesses the insights which the diary provides into life on Australia’s northern frontier in the latter part of the nineteenth century.