

CAROLINE LYNCH, formerly Dexter 1819 - 1884

Caroline Dexter [nee Harper] born 6 January 1819, Nottingham, England, was a watchmaker, writer, editor, art collector, patron and feminist.

Caroline arrived in Sydney in 1855 and with husband, painter William Dexter opened a short-lived Gallery of Arts & School of Design.

In 1856 in Stratford, Gippsland she published her Ladies Almanack: *The Southern Cross* or *Australian Album and New Years Gift*. It was distinguished by its positive attitude towards aboriginals and witty maxims on 'how to manage a husband'. In newspapers and pamphlets, using various pseudonyms, (*Budgery, Gum Leaf*), she commented on social issues and lampooned political identities.

She held literary evenings in Melbourne's Mechanic Institute, and startled society with her *Institute of Hygiene* which advised women to discard their corsets and wear divided skirts. She edited *Interpreter*, a publication which championed women's rights, appealed to colonists to forget their past and chastised the 'white man's betrayal of the noble savage'.

During 1861 Caroline married William Lynch, lawyer and future Mayor of Brighton, held salons in seaside *Bombala*, became a patron of local writers and artists and acquired an impressive art collection.

Caroline is included in Alice Spring's *National Pioneer Woman's Hall of Fame* as the first woman to publish a magazine in Australia. A Canberra street is named after her. She died 19 August 1884.

Notes by Sandra Lanteri