



Assessment of Significance of the Wenz Collection of Books Forbes, NSW

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1.0 Historical Background

1.1 Brief Chronology of Paul Wenz and Hettie Dunne

1869	Wenz born in Rheims, France
1879-89	Wenz at school and then military service. Meets Andre Gide at school. Enters family business, a wool-buying company
1891-2	Wenz in Algeria for experience running a colonial property
1892	Wenz moves to Australia
1893-4	Wenz works and travels Australian pastoral areas
1895	Wenz visits New Zealand and Pacific, Spends time looking for La Perouse shipwreck in Queensland
1896	Wenz visits Europe and then decides to move permanently to Australia. Possibly met Hettie Dunne on return voyage. Living on Nanima Station with view to purchasing
1897	Dunne and Wenz engaged. Nanima purchased and property expanded
1898-1889	Dunne and Wenz honeymoon to Hong Kong, Japan, United States, Mexico, to France. Return to Nanima
1900-1904	Dunne and Wenz work at Nanima. Dunne and Wenz visit New York. Wenz publishes under 'Paul Warrego' Collection of stories <i>A l'autre bout du monde</i>
1905-1907	Dunne and Wenz mostly at Nanima working on property
1908	Wenz publishes <i>Diary of a New Chum</i> . In Sydney they meet Jack London and Lawrence Hargraves
1909-1910	Dunne and Wenz travel through Asia to France, then return to Australia with their eldest nephew Jean Wenz
1911	Wenz translates Jack London's <i>Love of Life</i>
1912	Wenz goes to South America. Back in Sydney Wenz and Dunne meet Roald Admundsen polar explorer. Jean Wenz returns to France. Wenz and Dunne ski in the Snowy Moutains.
1913	Wenz and Dunne travel extensively through New Zealand, South America, West Indies, Asia and to France and then England.
1914-1918	Getting ready to return to Australia War breaks out and Wenz and Dunne assist the war effort in France. Wenz works with the Red Cross. Dunne goes to London in 1915 and works with the Red Cross, making parcels and serving the Australian canteen. Wenz takes an interest in the repatriation of blind soldiers. At War's end he proposes an Australian mission to Morocco.
1919	Wenz is interpreter for Australian mission to Morocco, establishing

	wool and mutton trade links. Several of Wenz's stories published. Wenz and Dunne arrive back in Sydney and return to Nanima after 6 years.
1920-1923	Life at Nanima. Wenz publishes more stories, including a Collection of war stories. Dunne closely supervises the property and efforts to expand to dairying.
1924-1925	Wenz and Dunn travel extensively overseas through Asia, Africa, Europe.
1926-1927	At Nanima. Wenz continues writing. They travel to Sumatra, Singapore, Malaysia, Indo-China, Colombo to France.
1928-1929	France, and then back to Australia via Perth. Wenz meets Nettie Palmer. <i>Le Jardin des Coraux</i> published in France, reviewed by Palmer in <i>The Bulletin</i> . Wenz writes to his friend Jo Krug that life is difficult at Nanima and the property is mortgaged. He notes too that station life is boring.
1930-1932	Wenz and Dunn at Nanima but many trips to Melbourne and around the countryside by car. Wenz continues writing and corresponding with authors. Sends <i>L'Echarde</i> to Chris Brennan.
1933-1934	Wenz and Dunne travel again to France. Wenz's books included in Melbourne Centenary Book Exhibition.
1935	Nanima hosts French dignatories. Wenz and Dunne visit Queensland for relief from 'lumbago'. In his letters Wenz increasingly gloomy over world political situation.
1936-1938	Nanima's economic prospects looking up. Wenz corresponds with Miles Franklin, exchanging books for review. Miles Franklin and Frank Clune visit Nanima. Wenz and Dunne travel to France again.
1939-1945	Wenz and Dunne return. Wenz increasingly ill and dies 23 rd August. Dunne is 'heartbroken' but determined to 'continue on' at Nanima and manages the property during the War years.
1946-1949	Nanima effected by returned soldiers land legislation. Dunne decides to leave Nanima and retire to Sydney.
1950-1959	Dunne lives at Hotel Pacific in Manly leaving Nanima in care of a manager until her death in 1959. Wenz and Dunne's Collection of books is dispersed – Forbes Historical Society taking 'about 700' with others going to the Mitchell Library.

1.2 Historical Outline of Paul Wenz, Hettie Dunne and their books

Paul and Hettie were both born in 1869 on different sides of the globe. However they both had something in common – family pastoral interests. Their lives were to merge through the increasingly global connections of colonialism in the late nineteenth century. Paul Wenz's father commenced a wool-buying business in Rheims, France in 1859. The company commenced business with Australia in 1878, with their own wool buyers in both Sydney and Melbourne.¹ Hettie's full name was Harriet Adela Annette Dunne. She was born in South Australia into a Grazier's family.²



Painting of Paul Wenz in the Forbes & District Historical Society Museum.

The story of Paul Wenz is relatively well known.³ Born into a wealthy French Protestant family, he went to an exclusive school in Paris and was then introduced into the family wool-buying business. After various overseas 'investigative ventures' for the business, Wenz settled in Australia with a sum of money and apparently with 'instructions' from his family to purchase a property - but to visit France every four years.⁴

Wenz seems to have taken the Australian outback to heart and decided to learn Station work and ways thoroughly, rather than manage from afar. His experiences as a jackeroo formed a theme in much of his work and the basis of his work *Diary of a New Chum*, first published in 1908.

In 1896 travelling by ship on his second visit to Australia - the voyage to 'permanently' settle there - Wenz met Hettie Dunne. From the amount of books in the Wenz Collection that Hettie Dunne bought into their combined library, Paul would have met a well-read and educated woman. Perhaps they met because Hettie spoke French - one of the books in the Collection was a school prize awarded to her for her progress in French language.⁵ The fact Hettie was from a grazier's family may have been significant as well. Unfortunately the life of Hettie Dunne is less well documented than her husband Paul.

¹ Letter from Claude Gonin, Wenz's nephew, April 1993. Forbes Historical Society Archives. On Paul and Hettie's marriage certificate, Paul described his father as a 'Wool Merchant'. Hettie described her father as a 'late Grazier'.

² Marriage certificate of Paul Wenz and Hettie Dunne, Forbes Library Archives Wenz File.

³ Wenz has an entry in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* and the *Oxford Companion to Australian literature*. His life and work is outlined in many newspaper articles and several French works including Jean-Paul Delamotte's *Paul Wenz: A la Recherche du Ecrivain Perdu*. The re-publishing of probably his most famous book, *Diary of a New Chum*, also includes an outline of his life and some of his correspondence with significant historical individuals.

⁴ According to Erica Wolf in 'Paul Wenz and Australia' in *Le Courrier Australien*, 1969.

⁵ One of the Collection books, *Mildred's mistake: still-life study*, is inscribed in French; 'Presenter a Mademoiselle Henrietta Dunne Pour la progres dans la langue Francaise, Francoise McDowell' (1877).

After arriving in Sydney Paul spent time 'courting' Hettie who was then in Melbourne. He also built up the station at Nanima before bringing Hettie there. Paul and Hettie were married in Forbes in 1898 both aged 29. Wenz continued to oversee his family's wool-broking agency in Melbourne.

Around 1900 Wenz began publishing stories in French magazines under the pseudonym Paul Warrego. 1905 saw Wenz's first book published *A L'autre Bout Du Monde: Aventures et moeurs Australiennes*, a Collection of sixteen short stories, published in France in French. In 1908 Wenz published *Diary of a New Chum* in Melbourne. Wenz wrote and reviewed other author's work and also he translated a number of works into French. Most of his own work was written in French, yet it wasn't until 1929 when Nettie Palmer wrote in *The Bulletin* calling for his work to be published in English that Wenz began to receive a wider English language audience. Ultimately five of Wenz's books were published in French with an Australian theme. Wenz familiarised France with the classic late nineteenth/early twentieth century Australian outback in a relatively simple language.

The Wenzes worked hard at their property at Nanima, although still travelled overseas a great deal after their marriage. Hettie's journeys with Paul through Africa and on the trans-Siberian railway were quite remarkable for a woman of this time. They travelled extensively through Southeast Asia, the Pacific, South America, Africa and Europe.

When the First World War broke out Paul and Hettie were in France and became very active in the War with the Red Cross, at times ferrying wounded during bombardments.⁶ The Wenzes returned to Australia in 1919 and put a deal of energy into their Nanima property. Paul Wenz wrote extensively from around 1900 till his death in 1939. He remained relatively unknown in Australia, primarily because he chose to write in French.

Hettie survived Paul and lived in 'retirement' in Sydney from 1950 to 1959. Hettie was described as being 'young' and vibrant even at the age of 80.⁷

In the 1990s the re-publishing of *Diary of a New Chum*, with 'other lost stories' and a selection of Wenz's correspondence with famous literary figures, created a revival of interest in the life and work of Paul Wenz.⁸

There has been a deal of historiography on Paul Wenz as he represents a rare figure in Australian literary traditions, as well as the story of Australian multiculturalism – particularly in regional Australia.⁹ Wenz's associations with other literary figures and important historical figures, such as Lawrence Hargraves, have been emphasised as part of his significance for Australian literary history, as well as Australian history in general. The fact that Wenz was based for thirty years at a rural property in mid-western NSW has always been slightly incongruous to such a well-read literary figure. However

⁶ Forbes Advocate 22nd November 1918.

⁷ Letter from Claude Gonin, Wenz's nephew, April 1993. Forbes Historical Society Archives.

⁸ Paul Wenz *Diary of a New chum and Other Lost Stories*, Maruice Blackman (ed), Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1990 (first published in 1908).

⁹ Frank Moorhouse describes Wenz as having an 'exceptional place in our literary history' (Moorhouse, 'Reading Paul Wenz' in *Diary of a New Chum and Other Lost Stories*, 1990, p1).

this apparent incongruity is one of the key factors of the importance of Paul Wenz to Australian history.

The influence of Henry Lawson and the Bush balladists of 1890-1910 is always present in Wenz's writings on Australia.¹⁰ Never an outstanding author in his own right, Wenz's work, as Frank Moorhouse notes, 'has more to say to us than it's literary intention'.¹¹ Wenz is part of the Australian Bush literature tradition that is so significant to Australian history, not only in its depictions of the outback, but in its creation of the outback in the Australian imagination. The fact a worldly Frenchman and his worldly Australian wife were part of this is quite important to Australians' social, cultural and historical understanding.

The place of Hettie Wenz in 'Wenz' historiography is sadly overlooked. Hettie appears to have been at home at Namima just as she was dining and conversing with Jack London or Miles Franklin. The role of Hettie in Paul's literary successes has never been investigated. For someone who read and spoke French and obviously knew a great deal about the Australian outback, her input into Wenz's work may have been quite significant. In Paul's published letters he often notes his own 'limitations' with Australian vernacular or customs, even his English. How much work had Hettie to do with helping Paul here?

The life and work of the Wenzes is a reminder that Australian national memory is founded on cultural diversity and that rural Australia is not always a masculine story of struggle and hardship.

1.3 Paul and Hettie Wenz Book Collection

According to Merrill Findlay's extensive and detailed catalogue of the Collection there are 691 books in total, of which around 100 are in French.¹² Findlay has noted all annotations and inscriptions on the books and, perhaps surprisingly, many are marked as Hettie's. The Collection has been consistently referred to as the 'Paul Wenz Collection' or the 'Wenz Library'. However at least half the books in the Collection are Hettie Wenz's.

The earliest dated book is 1832 and the latest 1937. The range of the Collection is vast and includes an array of diverse titles that reflects the Wenz's broad literary, scientific and travel interests. From items such as *Heroes of the west: biographical sketch of modern history* (1902) to *Wilson's tales of the borders and of Scotland* (1887), to *A practical treatise on petroleum* (1890), the Wenz Collection is an insight into the formation of Paul and Hettie's tastes, ideas and desires to travel far from Namima. Some of the titles are quite mundane, though obviously useful for such world travellers. The *Highlands of Scotland: time & fare tables of approaches from all parts and steamer*

¹⁰ Maurice Blackman 'A French-Australian Writer' in *Diary of a New Chum and Other Lost Stories*, 1990, p13.

¹¹ Frank Moorhouse, 'Reading Paul Wenz' in *Diary of a New Chum and Other Lost Stories*, 1990, p1.

¹² Merrill Findlay 'Paul and Hettie Wenz Collection – Catalogue of Titles, Forbes Library, NSW' 2004.

& *coach routes in the district* (1890) sits alongside such authors as Thackeray, Conrad, Voltaire and Shakespeare.

If they were not travelling, Paul and Hettie would have been reading about it. Their library has many titles that could have either inspired them to travel to exotic locations or helped them reminisce. Early 'tour guides' such as Treves' *The cradle of the deep: an account of a voyage to the West Indies* (1910), Henry Walsh's *Bonhomme: French-Canadian stories and sketches*, (1899) or Michael Shoemaker's *The great Siberian railway from St Petersburg to Peking* (1903), are typical of many travel books in the Collection.

The Collection also holds many classic nineteenth and early twentieth century literary works by authors such as; Byron, Conrad, Dickens, Hardy, Hugo, Kipling, Maugham, and Stevenson. There are also several volumes of 'classics' by philosophers, writers and playwrights such as Virgil and Shakespeare.

Other titles include 'classic' historical works such as Lord McCaulay's *History of England*. Archaeological and Mythological titles such as Pitt's *The Tragedy of the Norse Gods* also show the widespread and eclectic nature of the Collection.

The Wenz Collection at Forbes Library 2005.

There are also two books at least that hold valuable semi-autobiographical information, such as Paul Wenz's 'Books I have read – personal notebook' and Hettie's 'Birds I have seen – a notebook'. As Merrill Findlay has noted, some of the older books were acquired from the Alliance Française Bibliothèque and some were purchased on the Wenzes' travels. Some have notes from people who gave the Paul and Hettie books as gifts. Very few have no inscription or annotation at all.

From the dates, titles and various inscriptions of the volumes at Forbes library it seems certain the Wenz's Collection grew from books they both brought together when they were married and moved in to Nanima. Some books are inscribed 'Hettie Dunne' and dated before their marriage and several are inscribed 'Paul Wenz, Rheims' prior to 1886. Hettie was obviously well educated and bought with her to Nanima books that she had won as prizes at school. Paul appears to have bought with him to Australia certain 'classic' reference texts in French such as *Histoire de L'Europe et particulièrement de La France de 1610-1789*.

Interestingly, after Paul's death Hettie referred to the Collection as 'her books', adding weight to the suggestion the Collection is, and was thought of as, a shared Collection by Paul and Hettie.

When Hettie died in 1959 her will stipulated that the trustees of the Mitchell Library receive 'such of my books as they or their representatives may select for the purposes of



the Library'. In July 1959 the secretary of the Forbes District Historical Society 'bought back a sizeable Collection of books from the library at Nanima for Forbes Public Library'. Importantly, according to a local newspaper report, this was 'in addition to about 700 which the Forbes Council recently obtained from the estate, after the Mitchell Library of NSW had first taken over the main portion of the late Mr Wenz's remarkable Collection'.¹³

There is a unnamed and undated report in the Forbes Library Wenz file that suggests Wenz first donated books to the 'Peyton Bridge School Library', a school near Nanima.¹⁴ Another article in the Forbes Advocate suggests he donated land for the Peyton's Bridge school and 'founded a library there'.¹⁵ It is unclear whether the 'Nanima Library' referred to is Peyton's Bridge library or the Wenz library on the property Nanima.

Hettie's will also stipulated that all French language books not selected for the Mitchell Library be sent to the 'Fathers of the Catholic Mission at Yule Island' (near Papua New Guinea).¹⁶ It is unclear whether these volumes were indeed sent or whether they are the French titles still in the Collection.

The files in the Mitchell Library that dealt with the transfer of books to the Mitchell (then the Public Library of NSW) shed a deal of light on the break up of the Wenz Collection after Hettie's death in 1959.

Interestingly, the Public Library of NSW (PLNSW) representative estimated there were 2,000 volumes at Nanima when he visited on 11th June 1959. The representative selected

approximately 650 volumes for the PLNSW. These consisted of French classics, a quantity of Australiana of value, and a general assortment of books on a variety of subjects.

The representative continues:

For the Missionary Fathers at Yule Island I selected approximately 190 volumes. These were all in French and of no interest to the PLNSW. Approximately 1,160 books were not selected.¹⁷

The Public Library valued the books they received at between 150-300 pounds.

Several interesting points arise from this file. According to notes from Perpetual Trustees, the company directing Hettie's will, all of the remaining French books in the Collection were meant to go to Yule. This did not obviously happen, as there are titles in French at the Mitchell and at Forbes Library.

¹³ *Forbes Advocate* 7th July 1959. The article also notes Wenz's collecting habits and his 'souvenirs and antiques from all over the world' which it described as 'little short of a museum'.

¹⁴ Forbes Library Wenz file. Na, Nd., circa 1980

¹⁵ *Forbes Advocate* nd circa 1960 Forbes Library Wenz File.

¹⁶ According to Merrill Findlay

<http://users.tce.rmit.edu.au/e21811/merrillfindlay/Projects/PaulWenz2004.htm>. Accessed November 2005.

¹⁷ 'Wenz Collection' Mitchell Library File.

There appears to be approximately 540 books unaccounted for. If there were 2,000 books originally and the Mitchell received 650 (plus a 'box' from Christies - which may have been 30 volumes, as a count of the titles listed in the Mitchell file makes 682 rather than 650), 190 went to Yule and 690 remain at Forbes, there are approximately 540 books not accounted for.

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In the only published mention of the Wenz Collection, Maurice Blackman describes Paul Wenz's library as 'a library of the great writers'. This is not correct on two counts; the Wenz Collection is not solely a Collection of 'great writers' but includes many travel books, etc. It is also in great part Hettie's Collection.

Wenz mentions the books he was reading at the time in several letters. It would be interesting to collate all these and see if they survive in the current Collection. There is also a 'Books I Have Read' scrapbook at the Forbes museum. Although this is an important tangible link with the Collection, unfortunately it is not complete and only lasts a short time-frame.

Interestingly Paul Wenz described his own reading as 'a hotchpotch, a Bombay curry'. He wrote to friend and French author Andre Gide and suggested to Gide he would 'be shocked at my (Wenz's) intellectual nourishment... some Bret Harte, some Tristan Bernard, some Shakespeare and some Leon Frapie!'.¹⁸

¹⁸ Paul Wenz letter to Andre Gide 24 September 1911 in *Diary of a New Chum and Other Lost Stories*, 1990, p146.

2.0 Significance of the Wenz Collection

The following statement of the significance of the Wenz Collection is written according to the relevant Burra Charter principles and guidelines and National and State heritage significance guidelines.

Historic

The Collection of books is significant in that it is associated with Paul Wenz, a relatively important literary figure in Australia. It is a form of record of Paul and his wife Hettie Wenz's life, their travels and their intellectual interests. Paul Wenz contributed articles to many magazines in France and Australia including *The Bulletin*. Not one of Australia's greatest authors (Frank Moorhouse described Wenz as a 'good writer, not a great writer'; Judith White described him as 'not great, but gifted', the interest in and much of the importance of Wenz's work is, as Bruce Pascoe suggests, in the 'manner in which an immigrant writer embraces the new country and customs'.¹⁹ Wenz's work is significant in Australian literature and very important in French literature about Australia, as well as in the creation of wider French perspectives and understandings of Australia.

Apart from early colonial French explorers, Wenz is the most significant of all French writers on Australia.²⁰ Wenz's work is, in many ways, representative of Australian 'Bush' writing at the turn of the twentieth century, but it is more significant for its difference as a view of an 'outsider'. One of Australia's early 'multicultural writers', Wenz is regarded as Australia's 'only true Franco-Australian author'.²¹

Aesthetic

Many of the books in the Collection are relatively rare mid-late nineteenth century books and very good examples of nineteenth century book printing and binding methods and materials.

Scientific or Research

The Collection holds interesting potential for further research such as a cataloguing, collation and interpretation of the annotations in the books. This may

¹⁹ Bruce Pascoe 'Impressions from the new and old worlds' *Sydney Morning Herald* 2nd August 1990, Judith White 'Bush tales from a Frenchman' in *Sun Herald* 5th August 1990.

²⁰ See Edward Dukyer 'the Word in French' in National Library News Volume XII Number 1 October 2001 at; http://www.nla.gov.au/pub/nlanews/2001/oct01/french_books.html

²¹ Christine McGee 'On the trail of France's Henry Lawson' in *The Australian* 11th August 1989

shed further light on both Paul and Hettie Wenz's biographical information as well as on the formation of their literary and intellectual pursuits.

Social or Spiritual significance

The Collection holds a strong level of significance within the Forbes and Lachlan valley region and in wider French-Australian connections, as well as Australian and French literary interests. The district of Forbes has had a small but vibrant influence from French migrants who established wineries after the mid-nineteenth century Gold rushes. The Wenzes continued and fostered these connections by hosting French visitors at their Nanima property.

The Australian French community and French Government in Australia have shown interest in and support of the Wenz connections to Forbes. The Forbes Local Council, Museum and Library have fostered the display and retention of the Collection and other Wenz associated material as an important element of Forbes local history. In the late 1980s the French Embassy offered to hold the Collection, but new interest in Wenz at the time of the re-publishing of *Diary of a New Chum* led Forbes Council to keep the Collection in Forbes.

A number of local residents hold the connection of Paul Wenz to Forbes as a significant but underemphasized part of their local history.

Comparative Criteria 1: Provenance

The elements of the Collection not taken by the Mitchell Library have remained in Forbes since the death of Hettie Wenz. The vast majority of the Collection have some form of annotation or notes from, or to, Paul or Hettie that validate their provenance to the Wenzes and enhance their value as contextual information of their lives and work.

Comparative criteria 2: Representativeness

The Collection is very eclectic, ranging from encyclopedias to classic French and English literature, from novels, to travel writing, and from scientific works to early travel guides. The Collection is representative of a 'respectable' family library of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It is representative of many Collections held by individuals and donated to public institutions or libraries in Australia, such as the Mitchell Library in Sydney. It reflects the literary influences of such collectors and their social and political outlook on Colonialism and Modernity in Australia and the world.

Many country towns have held and preserved their Mechanics Institutes book Collections since the late nineteenth century and the Wenz Collection is representative of similar Collections that were often dependant on donations of books from wealthy local citizens. The Collection is not unlike a large number of

late nineteenth to early twentieth century book Collections, such as the 3,000 books at the Stawley Library in Victoria

The Collection represents the historical themes of French in Australia, migration to Australia, outback Australia in Australian and French literature, and the social and cultural activities and practices of rural Australians.

Comparative criteria 3: Rarity

The Paul and Hettie Wenz Collection is rare for its eclectic range of topics and French language titles. There are no comparable Collections of French migrants books in Australia. Australian Museums On-line lists no other similar Collections and all Wenz scholars and book Collection experts contacted have noted the limited listing of book Collections, apart from the most significant Collections such as at the National Library or State Libraries.

The Collection is a rare example of a library of a significant French-Australian literary figure. It is also a rare example of the literary tastes of an educated rural woman in early twentieth century regional Australia.

Comparative criteria 4: Condition, intactness and integrity

All the English titles in the Collection were in circulation at the Forbes Library for around 10 years. Considering this, the majority have remained in reasonably good condition. Some have been re-covered, and a very few have covers missing or damaged. Many have Forbes Library cards still in them, although this has not damaged these books greatly. Overall the majority of the books are in quite good to very good condition.

Unfortunately the Collection has been greatly dispersed. After the loss of 650 of what the Public Library of NSW judged to be the 'best' books, as well as the 190 titles going to the Yule Mission, and the fact that around 540 volumes appear to be missing, the integrity of the Collection has been greatly compromised.

Also, there is at least one book, if not more, that is not part of the Collection as it post-dates the Wenzes.

Comparative criteria 5: Interpretive potential

The Collection has a very high level of interpretive potential. The Collection has an important series of annotations and notes by both Paul and Hettie that could add significant information to the historical knowledge of the Wenzes and could generate considerable historical knowledge and understanding to the Forbes region. The Collection represents an important opportunity to interpret the cultural contribution of author Paul Wenz to the Forbes region and to wider Australia. It also highlights the social and cultural contributions of Hettie Wenz

(Dunne), otherwise generally obscured by her more well-known husband. It offers the potential for a broader interpretation of significant Australian historical themes such as early multiculturalism and rural women in Australia.

The display of Wenz material at Forbes Museum 2005

The Wenz Collection also strongly relates to several local historic places associated with the Wenzes, such as the their homestead 'Nanima'. This historic property is listed on the NSW State Heritage Inventory (SHI No: 1580226) and, although in private ownership, has potential to be part of any wider exploration of Wenz history.



The Collection has the potential to be united with other Wenz material held in Forbes Museum. The museum holds an important series of objects and images related to the Wenzes, such as family member sketchbooks, a painting of Wenz and Wenz furniture. At present the Collection is undistinguished among the Museum memorabilia, with little clear or prominent interpretation of the significance of the Wenz's. Some form of unification with the book Collection could create an important cultural and historical resource for the Forbes district. An important factor in this potential interpretation is that it highlights the role and historical importance of Hettie Wenz as well as illuminating the intellectual and literary significance of Paul Wenz.

Incredibly diverse and important historical themes thread the Wenzes lives, such as migration, station life, World War I, pastoralism, significant individuals and travel. These themes can be explored in the interpretation of the Collection. The array of literature that informed or interested author Paul Wenz is showcased in the Collection. The literature that informed or interested Hettie Wenz is also part of the Collection. It holds potential to be a significant element for any interpretive display or centre, as it highlights the literary significance of Paul Wenz and highlights Hettie Wenz's role as an educated woman in rural Australia.

The Collection of books is unique in the local region. It is also unique in interpretive displays in the region.

The Wenz Collection has interpretive potential for combinations in some form with French literary and cultural groups, as well as the Mitchell Library which houses some unpublished manuscripts and the Wenz Photographic Collection.

2.1 Summary of Significance

The National Heritage list criteria require that a place or item have 'outstanding heritage value to the nation'. Whilst the Wenz Collection of books is significant in terms of national themes, particularly as Wenz is an internationally and nationally known author from an important Australian literary tradition, it is not in itself an 'outstanding' Collection in terms of any of the National Heritage criteria.

The NSW Heritage guidelines for the assessment of historical association suggest an item may be of State significance if 'it is important in the course or pattern of NSW's cultural or natural history' (Section 4A(3), 4.5.1 Heritage Act 1977). The Collection of books, although full of annotations and notes from the Wenzes, does not specifically illuminate their historical associations to the course of NSW history.

The NSW Heritage guidelines for the assessment of historical association also suggest an item may be of State significance if it 'has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history' (Section 4A(3), 4.5.1 Heritage Act 1977). Paul Wenz is a person of importance in NSW's cultural history, however the eclectic Collection of books cannot in its current dispersed state be considered to have a 'strong or special association' with Wenz. The manuscripts, letters, etc. of the Wenzes may have such significance as they clearly show these associations through Wenz's literature and contact with other authors etc. Although the book Collection can offer insight into the life and work of the Wenzes, it is not inherent to the Collection and relies on significant further interpretation.

Overall, primarily due to the dispersal of the Collection when it came into public hands in 1959, the Collection cannot be classed as having National or State significance.

However, the Collection does have very strong local significance. It holds a strong level of significance within the Forbes and Lachlan valley region. The district of Forbes has had a small but vibrant influence from French migrants. The Forbes Local Council, Museum and Library have fostered the display and retention of the book Collection and other Wenz associated material as an important element of Forbes local history. A number of local residents hold the connection of Paul and Hettie Wenz to Forbes as a significant but underemphasized part of their local history.

The Collection is highly significant for the local area and should immediately be listed on a Local Environmental Plan (LEP) schedule or similar document.

2.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made by the author of this report for future arrangements etc. for the Wenz Collection.

Preservation, access and display.

Currently the Collection is poorly conserved. It is stored in a secure environment away from public access, however the room at Forbes Library is used for storage space and has bins, tables and chairs and even a cat and possibly food etc. in the immediate environment.

The Wenz Collection as it is currently stored in Forbes Library, 2005.

A Conservation Assessment conducted by an appropriate professional is recommended.

The books are arranged haphazardly. Access to researchers is limited by the small and largely blocked space.



There is no opportunity for display. The Collection of many historical books has an aesthetic quality that could be presented to the public. Display options such as visible storage should be considered.

Integrity of Collection

The Collection would be significantly enhanced by unification with the books at the Mitchell Library, Sydney. Investigation into the possibility of returning the Mitchell Library books is recommended.

The Mitchell Library files (copy attached) have information on every title accepted by the Library in 1959. These books have been dispersed across the library. However this record provides the opportunity to approach the Mitchell Library to either permanently reunite the Collection or possibly temporarily reunite the Collection. It is not usual for a major institution to consider such a proposal (though not unheard of).

Another option could be to pursue a temporary exhibition highlighting the Wenz material at Forbes and the Mitchell.

Historical Investigation

To establish firmer knowledge of several outstanding questions about the history of the Collection, such as whether any books went to Yule Island or not, a history

of Paul and Hettie Wenz should be commissioned. Beyond the scope of this assessment, a commissioned history would enhance the interpretation of the Collection as well as related material held in Forbes and the surrounding district.

At present there has been a deal of uncoordinated effort in relation to the Wenzes in Forbes. Much historiography has focused overly on the significance of Paul Wenz to the Forbes district at the expense of Hettie Wenz. Hettie appears to have been very instrumental in running Nanima, an outstanding example of an educated, well-travelled woman in rural Australia and an integral part of the success of Paul Wenz. With a more detailed analysis of the historical record and the information contained in the annotations in the Collection, the potential exists for an important contribution to Australian history.

Naming the Collection

The Collection should be formally known as the Paul and Hettie Wenz Collection to recognise the valuable contributions and important position in Forbes history of Hettie Wenz, as well as the fact the majority of the titles in the Collection are her books.

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